

EARLY DEATH COMES WITH REGULAR DRINKING OF DISTILLED WATER

During nearly 19 years of clinical practice I have had the opportunity to observe the health effects of drinking different types of water. Most of you would agree that drinking unfiltered tap water could be hazardous to your health because of things like parasites, chlorine, fluoride and dioxins. Many health fanatics, however, are often surprised to hear me say that drinking distilled water on a regular, daily basis is potentially dangerous. Paavo Airola wrote about the dangers of distilled water in the 1970's when it first became a fad with the health food crowd.

Distillation is the process in which water is boiled, evaporated and the vapour condensed. Distilled water is free of dissolved minerals and, because of this, has the special property of being able to actively absorb toxic substances from the body and eliminate them. Studies validate the benefits of drinking distilled water when one is seeking to cleanse or detoxify the system for short periods of time (a few weeks at a time). Fasting using distilled water can be dangerous because of the rapid loss of electrolytes (sodium, potassium, chloride) and trace minerals like magnesium, deficiencies of which can cause heart beat irregularities and high blood pressure. Cooking foods in distilled water pulls the minerals out of them and lowers their nutrient value.

Distilled water is an active absorber and when it comes into contact with air, it absorbs carbon dioxide, making it acidic. The more distilled water a person drinks, the higher the body acidity becomes. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Distilled water, being essentially mineral-free, is very aggressive, in that it tends to dissolve substances with which it is in contact. Notably, carbon dioxide from the air is rapidly absorbed, making the water acidic and even more aggressive. Many metals are dissolved by distilled water."

The most toxic commercial beverages that people consume (i.e. cola beverages and other soft drinks) are made from distilled water. Studies have consistently shown that heavy consumers of soft drinks (with or without sugar) spill huge amounts of calcium, magnesium and other trace minerals into the urine. The more mineral loss, the greater the risk for osteoporosis, osteoarthritis, hypothyroidism, coronary artery disease, high blood pressure and a long list of degenerative diseases generally associated with premature aging.

A growing number of health care practitioners and scientists from around the world have been advocating the theory that aging and disease is the direct result of the accumulation of acid waste products in the body. There is a great deal of scientific documentation that supports such a theory. A poor diet may be partially to blame for the waste accumulation. Meats, sugar, white flour products, fried foods, soft drinks, processed foods, alcohol, dairy products and other junk foods cause the body to become more acidic. Stress, whether mental or physical can lead to acid deposits in the body.

There is a correlation between the consumption of soft water (distilled water is extremely soft) and the incidence of cardiovascular disease. Cells, tissues and organs do not like to be dipped in acid and will do anything to buffer this acidity including the removal of minerals from the skeleton and the manufacture of bicarbonate in the blood. The longer one drinks distilled water, the more likely the development of mineral deficiencies and an acid state. I have done well over 3000 mineral evaluations using a combination of blood, urine and hair tests in my practice. Almost without exception, people who consume distilled water exclusively, eventually develop multiple mineral deficiencies. Those who supplement their distilled water intake with trace minerals are not as deficient but still not as adequately nourished in minerals as their non-distilled water drinking counterparts even after several years of mineral supplementation.

The ideal water for the human body should be slightly alkaline

and this requires the presence of minerals like calcium and magnesium. Distilled water tends to be acidic and can only be recommended as a way of drawing poisons out of the body. Once this is accomplished, the continued drinking of distilled water is a bad idea.

Water filtered through reverse osmosis tends to be neutral and is acceptable for regular use provided minerals are supplemented. Water filtered through a solid charcoal filter is slightly alkaline. Ozonation of this charcoal filtered water is ideal for daily drinking. Longevity is associated with the regular consumption of hard water (high in minerals). Disease and early death is more likely to be seen with the long term drinking of distilled water. Avoid it except in special circumstances.

REFERENCES

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Firstly, I have no vested interest in any specific type of water filtration system. I neither sell nor endorse any specific water filtration company products.

Secondly, my view on the hazards of distilled water are no different from those of numerous health authors, including my Alive Advisor predecessor, Dr. Paavo Airola (see his book "Are You Confused?", Alive Books). Scientific studies do not support your views and show that distilled water has the wrong ionization, pH, polarization and oxidation potentials for good health.

I do not dispute any positive results you or your relatives have had as a result of drinking distilled water. For short term detoxification purposes, the use of distilled water can be beneficial. Beyond this, any benefits of drinking distilled water are due to the placebo effect. For long term, regular drinking purposes, the scientific literature as well as my own clinical observations do not support the consumption of distilled/soft water.

For example, a 1991 study of 27 municipalities in Sweden showed an inverse relationship between water hardness (mineral content) and mortality from cardiovascular disease (Rylander et al. Magnesium and calcium in drinking water and cardiovascular mortality. *Scand. J. Work Environ. Health* 17:91-4, 1991). Other studies indicate that the lower the magnesium content of drinking water (distilled water has zero magnesium), the higher the risk of heart attacks (Bloom, S. Myocardial calcification, acute infarction and Mg in drinking water: Salt Lake City vs. Washington, DC. *J. Am. Coll. Nutr.* 8(5):455, 1989).

A lack of minerals in drinking water (i.e distilled water) is also associated with a higher cancer risk. One Canadian study (Norie, I.H. and Foster, H.D. Water quality and cancer of the digestive tract: The Canadian experience. *J. Orthomol. Med.* 4(2):59-69, 1989) concludes that, at both the national and provincial levels, Canadian mortality from cancers of the digestive tract is highest where the water content of minerals like calcium and magnesium are the lowest. People drinking soft water have a higher incidence of colon cancer (see *Science News* 3/2/85 p. 141 and 9/21/85 p. 187).

Most studies also show that hard water consumption is associated with lower BP levels than soft water (Borgman, R.F. Dietary factors in essential hypertension. *Prog. Food Nutr. Sci.* 9:109-47, 1985). The harder the water, the lower the incidence of kidney stones (Sierakowski, R. et al. Stone incidence as related to water hardness in different geographical regions in the United States. *Urol. Res.* 7:157-60, 1979). The number of scientific studies opposed to drinking soft/distilled water is substantial. I could not find a single scientific reference supportive of drinking distilled water regularly for health enhancement purposes.

Distilled water drains your body of minerals. I say this not only because hundreds of other natural health care professionals do (Haas, Elson M. *Staying Healthy with Nutrition. The Complete Guide to Diet & Nutritional Medicine.* Berkeley, California:Celestial Arts, 1992; p. 22.), but because I have observed first hand how this is so in hundreds of patients in my own clinical practice. Without exception, those who drink distilled water exclusively, unless they supplement with high doses of trace minerals, typically become deficient in calcium, magnesium, manganese, copper, zinc, iron and many other trace minerals within a year. This fact is evidenced by yearly mineral analyses done through blood, urine and hair mineral analyses. While this observation is not published anywhere other than in my own books, it is not unexpected given the studies I quoted earlier.

Trusting this answers your questions concerning the scientific support for my position on distilled water.

Sincerely,
Zoltan P. Rona, M.D., M.Sc.