# *Logo  Description automatically generated*1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 600Alexandria, VA 22314703-647-4609jculora@bottledwater.org[www.bottledwater.org](file:///%5C%5Cibwavmsbs%5Ccompany%5CHOME%5CChris%5CLetters%2C%20Responses%20%26%20Statements%5CLetters%20%26%20Responses%5C2012%5Cwww.bottledwater.org)

**June 7, 2024**

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Dear Editors:

I am writing on behalf of the International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) regarding your article “*How to avoid eating microplastics*” (<https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/how-to-avoid-eating-microplastics/>). This article contains false and misleading claims about the safety and quality of bottled water. We request that you update your story to include the following important bottled water facts so that your readers are not misled about this safe, healthy, and convenient consumer product.

The Wirecutter: “… tips on how to reduce the amount of tiny plastics and their chemicals that you (or your kids) might ingest.

1. **Cut back on bottled water**

Bottled water is a significant source of microplastics.”

IBWA: Bottled water is just one of thousands of food and beverage products packaged in plastic. While many studies on micro- and nanoparticles have used water samples (tap and bottled), it is important to understand that researchers use water because it is the least complex testing medium. Conclusions that drinking water is a major route for oral intake of micro- and nanoplastics are not justified based on the current science available. In addition, there are currently no certified testing methods and no scientific consensus on the potential health impacts of micro- and nanoplastics.

Moreover, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the agency that regulates bottled water as a food product, says “it is not aware of scientific evidence that would support consumers being concerned about the potential level of microplastic or nanoplastic contamination in food, including bottled water.”

And the World Health Organization (WHO), after reviewing available studies, concluded that no adverse health effects could be drawn from dietary exposure to micro- and nanoplastic particles less than 10 microns due to minimal scientific research. WHO’s recommendation is for more research to be conducted, as well as establishing standardized methods for measuring and quantifying nano- and microplastics. (Source: “[Dietary and inhalation exposure to nano- and microplastic particles and potential implications for human health.”](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/362049/9789240054608-eng.pdf) Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022.)

The 2024 Columbia University study referenced in your Wirecutter article has raised many questions in the scientific community. Scientists are voicing uncertainty about the identification and quantification of potential nano- and microplastic particles in the environment. Those scientist point out:

* The Columbia study used a novel testing method that has not been replicated or validated;
* There are questions about whether nano- and microplastic particles (e.g., nylon) were properly distinguished from other commonly present organics, like proteins having similar chemical structures;
* And questions concerning potential contamination sources in the laboratory and from the air, which is a well-known source of particles.

Another scientist offered this strong statement on this issue: “*Studies on MPs [microplastics] using analytical methods, which are not acknowledged, should no longer be published. Furthermore*, scientists and ideally journalists should have a critical look on applied methods before trusting in the results of studies.” Ossmann, B. E. (2021), published in Current Opinion in Food Science, 41, 44–51 (<https://doi.org/10.1016/J.COFS.2021.02.011>)

The bottled water industry is committed to providing consumers with the safest and highest quality healthy-hydration products. Because there are no certified testing methods and no scientific consensus on the potential health impacts of micro- and nanoplastics, the bottled water industry, like the WHO and FDA, supports conducting additional research on this important issue before any conclusions about the health effects of micro- and nanoplastics can be made.

We request that your article be updated so that your readers have the facts regarding this issue. We are also concerned that misleading consumers about the safety and quality of bottled water could deter consumers from drinking the healthiest packaged beverage on the shelf: bottled water. In 2023, bottled water outsold carbonated soft drinks (by volume) again, retaining its title as America’s favorite packaged beverage for the eighth year in a row.

Americans are making great efforts to live a better lifestyle by choosing healthier foods and beverages, and drinking water—tap, bottled, or filtered—should be encouraged. With the high rates of obesity, diabetes, and heart disease in our on-the-go society, bottled water provides a safe, healthy, and, as is noted in your story, convenient beverage choice. Discouraging people from choosing this healthy drink option is not in the public interest.

We request that you update your online story to reflect the facts we’ve provided so that the NYT does not misinform its readers about bottled water’s health impacts.

Sincerely,



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