# *Logo Description automatically generated*1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 600 Alexandria, VA 22314 703-647-4609 [jculora@bottledwater.org](mailto:jculora@bottledwater.org) [www.bottledwater.org](file:///\\ibwavmsbs\company\HOME\Chris\Letters,%20Responses%20&%20Statements\Letters%20&%20Responses\2012\www.bottledwater.org)

July 18, 2024

Dr. Sanjay Gupta

CNN - Chief Medical Correspondent

1 CNN Center

Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Cc: Jen Christensen, Catherine Brosseau

Dear Dr. Gupta:

I am writing on behalf of the International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) regarding your story “The surprising ways microplastics enter our body” (<https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/16/health/video/microplastics-nanoplastics-plastic-pollution-credit-card-digvid> ). This news story 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.

Dr. Gupta at 00:25 says: “One study found that we would be consuming roughly a credit card size worth of plastic in just a week.”

IBWA: Scientists looked into the study you reference, and they discovered a significant math error. The correct timeframe is not one week but rather every 23,000 years – a very big difference. A 2022 article published in the *Journal of Hazardous Materials Letters,* “Ingested microplastics: Do humans eat one credit card per week?,” explains the calculation’s “severe errors,” and notes that “great care must be taken when combining microplastic data of different measurements.” See: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666911022000247>.

Dr. Gupta at 00:33 says: “Those plastics have now been linked to heart attacks, strokes, and early death.”

## IBWA: Independent scientist Chris DeArmitt, PhD, FRSC FIMMM, cautions people to remember that when they hear the word “linked” that correlation does not mean causation, giving the example of how both ice cream sales and shark attacks increase in summer months, but have nothing to do with each other. Read more at <https://plasticsparadox.com/microplastics/>.

Dr. Gupta at 01:43 says: “So, what can you do to reduce your exposure? . . . It’s probably time to stop using bottled water.”

IBWA: Bottled water is just one of thousands of food and beverage products (including soft drinks and juices) 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.”

In addition, 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.)

When reporting on the emerging issue of microplastics, another scientist, Barbara E Ossmann, PhD, of the Bavarian Health and Food Safety Authority, offers scientists and journalists the following great advice: “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.” Learn more from her article published in Current Opinion in Food Science: <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 story be updated so that your viewers 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 CNN does not misinform its readers about bottled water’s health impacts.

Sincerely,



Jill Culora  
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International Bottled Water Association

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