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Dear Editors:

I am writing on behalf of the International Bottled Water Association (IBWA) regarding your article "Water, Water, Everywhere," published in the February/March edition of *AARP The Magazine*. Bottled water is America's favorite packaged drink, and we thank you for covering the important topic of drinking water safety in your magazine. We do, however, have a few corrections that we hope you'll share with your readers so that they are not mislead about bottled water's position in the marketplace, and its safety and quality.

- On the issue of ingesting microplastics: 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. The FDA 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.* [Read more here.](#)
- Regarding potential links to health impacts of ingesting plastic nano- and microparticles, 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 here.](#)

- Conveniently sized 12- and 16.9-ounce bottled water containers are made using PET plastic, and there are no bisphenols, like bisphenol A (BPA) in PET plastic. [Learn more here](#). BPA is a compound used to make polycarbonate plastic (PC), which is a completely different type of plastic. PC is used in some refillable sports bottles, some food and beverage can liners and lids, and some home and office delivery 3- and 5-gallon water bottles, which represents less than 10% of the bottled water market. Based on the FDA's ongoing safety review of scientific evidence, the available science continues to support the safety of BPA for the currently approved uses in food containers and packaging.
- For consumers who want fluoride in their drinking water and wish to choose bottled water, they can choose a fluorinated brand from a company that produces fluoridated bottled water products. When fluoride is added to bottled water, these bottled water companies must follow strict fluoride labeling requirements to ensure that consumers are aware that fluoride has been added to the product. In addition, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sets limits on the amount of fluoride in bottled water, whether added or naturally occurring (21C.F.R. §165.110(b)(4)(ii)(A-D)).
- Contrary to statements in this article about tap water and people's drinking preferences, bottled water emerged in the marketplace in recent decades as a convenient packaged beverage that competes with other less healthy packaged drinks such as soda and juice, as research conducted by the Beverage Marketing Corporation shows. Indeed, much of the growth of bottled water sales has come from people switching from sugary drinks to packaged water. See: [here](#).
- Most water drinkers consume both tap and bottled water. In fact, a 2024 survey conducted by The Harris Poll for IBWA, shows that 70% of people drink both tap water and bottled water. Only 18% of people said they drink only bottled water.
- The consumption of water—whether from the bottle, tap, or filter—is a good thing, and any actions that discourage people from drinking bottled water are not in the public interest.
- Bottled water containers do not produce “a lot of extra plastic” as stated in this article. In fact, the opposite is true: bottled water containers use almost one-third of the amount of plastic as soda bottles (8.3g for water and 22.2g for soda) because soda bottles require thicker plastic due to carbonation. As people make the switch from soda to water, the amount of plastic used is reduced.
- In relation to bottled water's contribution to plastic in the environment, all bottled water containers, whether packaged in PET, HDPE, or PC plastic, are 100% recyclable, unlike most reusable water containers that are made from either plastics that are difficult to recycle or materials that are not recyclable

because they contain a mixture of metal and composite substances. Bottled water containers are among the easiest packaging types to recycle and make up 52% of all PET plastic beverage containers collected in curbside programs in the United States. Bottled water containers should always be placed in a recycling bin (empty, with the cap on).

- Bottled water packaging uses a tiny amount of plastic compared to all plastic that is produced and used, which by the way, is also a small part of all material waste generated. Most people don't realize that plastic production makes up less than 1% of all material produced in the U.S. See [more here](#).
- It should be noted that purified bottled water that is made by using water from a public water system is not "just tap water in a bottle." Once the tap water enters the bottled water plant several processes are employed to ensure that it meets the purified standard of the U.S. Pharmacopeia 23rd Revision. These treatments can include reverse osmosis, distillation, or de-ionization, and they remove contaminants from the water, and as noted in the article, purifying water will improve unpleasant tastes and odors. The finished water product, which is far different from the water that comes out of your tap, is then placed in a bottle under sanitary conditions and sold to consumers. The FDA has information on its website describing different [types of bottled water here](#).

We request that you run a correction in the next issue of your magazine, so your readers have the facts regarding these important issues. We are 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 2024, bottled water retained its title as America's favorite packaged beverage for the ninth 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 convenient beverage choice. Discouraging people, especially older Americans whom science has shown to be more vulnerable to dehydration, from choosing this healthy drink option is not in the public interest.

Sincerely,

*Jill Culora*

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