

Chlorine

Dr. Herbert Schwartz of Cumberland County College in Vineman, N.J. says: "*Chlorine has so many dangers it should be banned. Putting chlorine in the water supply is like starting a time bomb. Cancer, heart trouble, premature senility, both mental and physical, are conditions attributable to chlorine treated water supplies. It is making us grow old before our time by producing symptoms of aging such as hardening of the arteries.*"

Chlorine has been hailed as the saviour against cholera and various other water-borne diseases; and rightfully so. Its disinfectant qualities and economy of production have allowed communities and whole cities to grow and prosper by providing disease-free tap water to homes and industry. Some people have grown-up on tap water, and believe the taste of chlorine signifies purity and safety. Well, not necessarily so.

Chlorine is, essentially, bleach. And what comes out of most municipally delivered faucets is, quite actually, a mild bleach solution. Is it healthy to drink bleach? Does your body require any certain amount of chlorine to remain healthy? Feel free to consult a physician on that somewhat rhetorical question.

Consider some well-known attributes of chlorine. Let's say, "the dark side" of the saviour. A PhD chemist friend put it this way: "If I were assigned to go into a lab and produce a menu of known carcinogens (cancer-causing agents), the first thing I would do would be to grab-up a cylinder of chlorine and start bubbling it through some water that contains naturally occurring organic acids (humic and fumatic acids -- as are found in all natural bodies of water like rivers, lakes, reservoirs, etc.)."

Note the "chloro" part in the following: trichlorophosphate (TCP) and the trihalomethane group (THMs) which includes chloroform. You may recognize these known bad guys by the legally imposed requirement of your municipality to periodically make report to the public (newspaper) on the levels of these known or highly suspected carcinogens in the tap water being produced. There are others, but those are popularly known. And they're all chlorine by-products.

Another problem directly related to chlorine disinfection are the aesthetic properties imparted when chlorine is combined with organic compounds that are natural to open bodies of water (surface water). This regards the "taste and odor" problems many municipalities experience during certain times of the year (especially in four-season latitudes) which draw their water supply from surface water. Surface water includes ponds, lakes, reservoirs, rivers, etc., as opposed to underground sources (wells, aquifers). Bubble chlorine through humic and fumatic acids common to surface water supplies and you produce the "fishy" or "musty" odors and tastes so common in the spring and fall, when the lake "turns-over."

The good news is, you don't have to drink it anymore. The most practical and efficient method for removing chlorine, chlorine by-products, and taste and odor problems, is to filter it with granular activated carbon (GAC) or other suitable chemical-removing filter media, such as KDF.

The municipalities are stuck. Environmental and public safety laws require most to maintain a chlorine residual throughout the entire water main delivery system. This is to retain some disinfecting properties in the event of groundwater infiltration and other contaminations. Barking at your local water company or water department about the taste and odor will accomplish nothing. Chances are, they're doing their best, and meeting the laws. ***The most practical solution to the problem is to take it back out at the "point of use" (POU) -- your own home or office.***

Steve Harrison, President
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