

Module 11, Lesson 1 Handout:

Water

Drink Up was a Nutritious Life pillar from the get go, and while we spend a lot of time with clients on strategies to drink more water and stay hydrated, we don't always address water safety. While water safety might not feel totally in your wheelhouse, clients may ask you questions and for recommendations on how to know if their water is safe.

The Environmental Protection Agency ensures that our water is safe and the SWA (Safe Water Act) of 1974 was put into place to regulate and ensure that our public water is safe.

If you are skeptical, worried or stressed that the water you are cooking your food with, pouring over your tea bag, and drinking from the tap is in any way in question, you can get a report on your water. It's from the CCR, or consumer confidence report, and it lists contaminants that have been detected in the water, including those by EPA, and whether the system meets state and EPA drinking water standards.

While about 10% of Americans use well water, and that water is not covered in the CCR or protected by the EPA, there are protocols that the EPA suggests and the maintenance is not crazy or complicated.

If you are concerned, check out the Environmental Working Group's tap water database (found at www.ewg.org/tapwater). They can look at your water filtration system's information up when you put in your zip code and voila, you get a list of contaminants and what they recommend for filtration. The database also has a section on what to do about these contaminants and how to filter them out. In general, drinking safe filtered tap water will be better for the environment than buying water in plastic single use containers (though in some extreme cases this becomes necessary for safety.)

Just like produce with pesticides, unless there is a crisis, the benefits of drinking water outweigh the risks. Remind clients to drink up and drink often. A few tips for making sure your water supply is safe include:

- Check the safety of your household water supply through EPA or EWG. The EWG database (www.ewg.org/tapwater) will identify contaminants and let you know how many exceed their guidelines
- Set reminders in calendars to change water filters regularly

- Don't drink water that was left in plastic bottles in a hot car as the heat can lead to chemicals leaching into the water. Better yet, switch out plastic water bottles for glass, and always carry a reusable bottle around to avoid the need to buy a single use container
- Wash, clean and dry water bottles well
- Reduce the amount of plastics and other one-use containers we use. Ultimately, these can end up in oceans
- Choose organic produce. Pesticides can end up in the water supply, and supporting organic agriculture can support the bigger picture