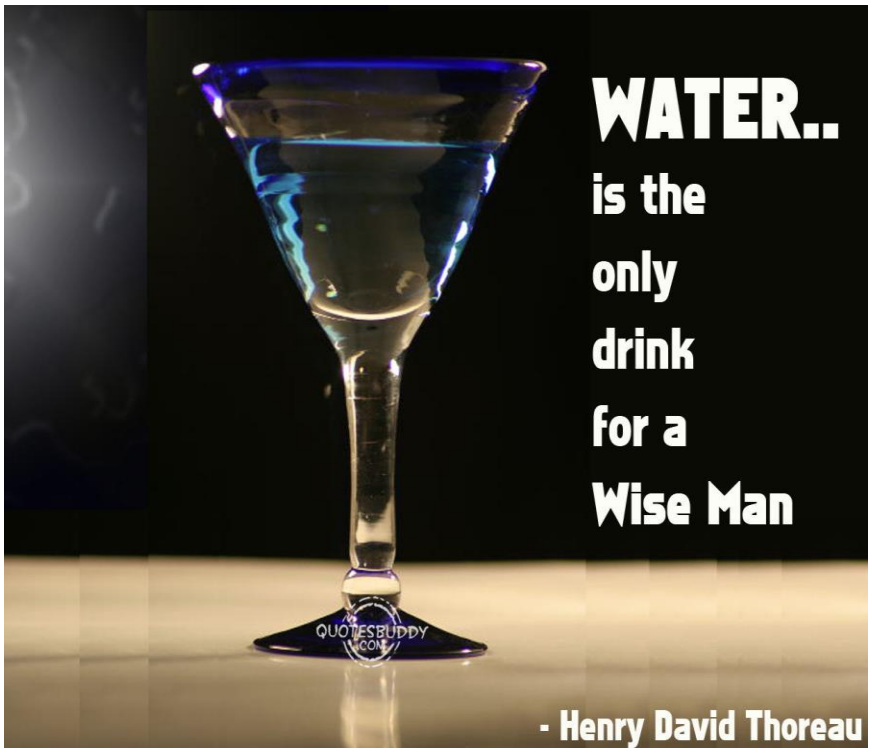
The Wisdom of Water



(Fig 1)

Last month's "Ask the Doctor" urged readers to "Re-think What They Drink" (Fig 1). The article concluded that water is the drink of choice for maintaining optimal hydration. The article also pointed out that tap water has distinct advantages over bottled water. However, despite its benefits, bottled water is the first choice for most Americans.

The goal of this month's article is to convince readers to cut back on consumption of bottled water and replace it with the healthier, less expensive and environmentally friendly choice: **Tap Water**. The key to making this transition is to make tap water just as convenient as bottled water, which can be accomplished by taking the following three steps.

1.

Step 1: Make it Convenient at Home:

(Fig. 2)

Make it in bulk and store it in your refrigerator. See last month's article for details. Convenient fenestrated inserts make it simple to remove fruit from water after four hours of soaking (Fig. 2). The fruit infused water should be good for at least 3 days.

Step 2: Make it Convenient At Work:

(Fig. 3)

2.

It's time to re-think the classic 5-gallon plastic water cooler at work. A better choice in terms of taste and cost would be to set up a "hydration station" at work that provides fruit infused water (Fig. 3). Having a fruit-infused water station at work is a bit more complicated than the classic water cooler, but it is tastier and less expensive in the long run.

A more practical solution for many offices would be to set up hydration stations that provide filtered drinking water as well as a portal to fill your personal water bottles (Fig. 4). The up front cost is higher than for five-gallon bottled water, but in the long run it is a healthier choice and will ultimately prove to be a money saver.

(Fig. 4)

Step 3: Personal Portable Water Containers:

There are an overwhelming number of choices for the "ideal" portable water container. The first step in determining which type of water bottle is best for you is to review the pros and cons of the three basic options for portable water containers: plastic, glass and metal.

Plastic:

Plastic seems to be the most popular choice. It is lightweight and relatively inexpensive. Newer models are resistant to breakage when dropped (Fig. 5).

Some are also designed with convenient holders for fruit (Fig. 6).

Fig. 5-6

The concern about plastic is that chemicals from within the plastic can leach out into the water. Today's modern plastic water bottles are for the most part "food-grade" and almost free of BPA and phthalates. Critics point out that there could be other chemicals that can seep out of plastic when bottles are exposed to heat or when water sits around in them for a longtime.

Glass:

Glass maybe the best choice for those who seek " Purity of Taste." It is completely chemical free and dishwasher safe. High quality glass like Pyrex is lighter and more durable that standard glass, and is an excellent choice for a portable water bottle. When choosing a glass water bottle, make sure it has been tested for cadmium and lead content. If not, don't purchase it.

Stainless Steel:

Stainless steel is lightweight, durable and reasonably priced. It comes in a wide variety of shapes and colors (Fig. 7-8: Note convenient flip top). Make sure you choose bottles made of "culinary-grade" stainless steel and the label states "lead-free". Also note, some stainless steel bottles are lined with plastic, not a good choice.

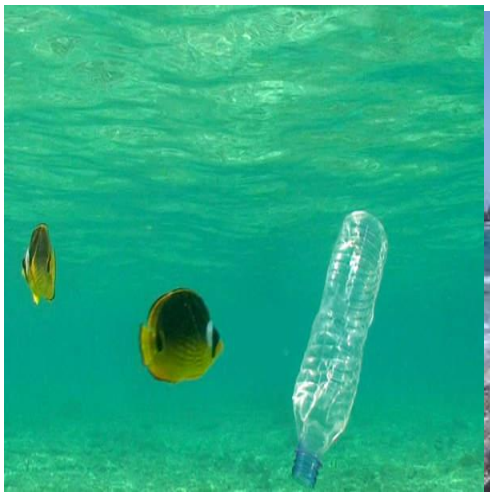

Fig. 7-8.

It should also be noted that aluminum can look like stainless steel, but it is not a good choice. They are lined with epoxy or enamel both of which can contain toxins that leach out into the water.

Some people are said to detect a slight metallic taste with stainless steel. A squeeze of lemon should solve this problem. All in all, stainless steel maybe the best overall choice and glass a good second choice for those who want "purity of taste." Sorry plastic, you would be my third choice (but plastic seems to the first choice of most of my friends).

The problem with Plastic Water Bottles:

Although the initial goal of this month's "Ask the Doctor" was to encourage readers to drink more tap water, it soon became obvious that there was another critical issue to be addressed: **the devastating effect of plastic water bottles on the environment** (Fig. 9-10).



(Fig. 9-10)

It is not just the obvious problem of tons of plastic bottles washing ashore on pristine islands, and the estimated 46,000 pieces of plastic floating in every square mile of the ocean. The big problem for the future is that it takes centuries for the plastic to decompose and as it decomposes it releases toxins into the environment. It is a problem of epidemic proportions and not a good legacy for our grandchildren.

Key Points to remember about plastic water bottles

1. There are 50 billion water bottles consumed every year, about 30 billion of them in the US.

2. It takes 17 million barrels of oil each year just to produce all of those water bottles.

3. Only one in six bottles gets recycled.

4. Bottled water is approximately 1,000 times the cost of tap water. In double blind taste tests consumers cannot tell the difference between bottled and tap water (of note: in some tests the tap water was filtered).

I hope this article has convinced you to eliminate or at least to cut back and recycle plastic water bottles. Please contact us at.... if you have questions.

6.

The End.