

Glenn's Strategies for Well-Being: Hidden Water Facts

Written by Forward Times Staff
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By now, we've all gotten used to fluorine and chlorine in your drinking water. No big deal for many of us.

But how do you feel about antibiotics, anticonvulsants, mood stabilizers, and sex hormones in your drinking water? Associated Press conducted a five-month inquiry that detected pharmaceuticals in drinking water supplies of 24 of 28 major U.S. metropolitan areas. It found that a vast array of pharmaceuticals — including antibiotics, anti-convulsants, mood stabilizers and sex hormones — have been found in the drinking water supplies of at least 41 million Americans.

While most of the 25 cities investigated had between 1-15 detected pharmaceutical drugs in their tap water, Philadelphia water had 56 pharmaceuticals or byproducts, including medicines for pain, infection, high cholesterol, asthma, epilepsy, mental illness and heart problems! 63 pharmaceuticals or byproducts were found in the city's watersheds.

The concentrations of these pharmaceuticals are tiny, measured in quantities of parts per billion or trillion, far below the levels of a medical dose. But the presence of so many prescription drugs — and over-the-counter medicines like acetaminophen and ibuprofen — in so much of our drinking water raises worries among many scientists of the long-term consequences to human health. Drinking water treatment plants are not designed to remove these pharmaceutical residues.

Guess what else? This is also the water used to make sodas and other beverages at local

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bottling plants. So every time you pick up a can of soda and drink it, not only are you getting the dangerous chemicals intentionally added to those sodas — like aspartame and phosphoric acid — you're also getting trace amounts of medication chemicals.

So why, and how, is this happening?

Drugs and their derivatives get into the drinking water supply because when people on medication go to the toilet, they excrete whatever the body does not absorb and any metabolized byproducts. Water companies treat the waste before discharging it into rivers, lakes and reservoirs, and then treat it again before it enters the drinking water system. However, the various treatments don't remove all traces of drugs. And as we all know, everyone uses the toilet- including the people who take many different types of prescribed medications. And as you also know, what goes in, must come out. People think that if they take a medication, their body absorbs it and it disappears, but of course that's not the case.