



The facts and myths on distilled water

For those following the Gerson therapy™ the food and water that is consumed must be free of chemicals and pollutants. Water may become an issue as so many of the chemicals found in our water supply, particularly the xeno-oestrogens, induce cancer. The most effective methods of cleaning our water is through distillation or reverse-osmosis; so I recommend distilled or reverse osmosis water to all my clients, but you can imagine the amount of enquiries I get when people read articles which state that “early death comes from drinking distilled water” or within the context of “alkalinize or die” where distilled water is clearly branded as acidic. There are some very convincing arguments against distilled water so I thought I would address some of the issues raised in the articles that abound on the internet that would have you believe that distilled water is some sort of poison.

The first issue that arises is that distilled water is not only “empty” of minerals, but also leaches minerals from the body leading to severe deficiencies over a prolonged period of time. Firstly, we should look to food rather than water to boost our mineral supply; the amount of minerals per litre in spring water may be less than the equivalent in a few peas! Secondly, most fluids we take are hypotonic to blood (less concentrated with solutes than blood). So most fluid intake will generally dilute the blood. The kidneys, in order to maintain blood concentration (osmolality) will remove the excess fluid. If you drink a lot of water, regardless of where it comes from and how it is prepared, then you will suffer mineral losses along with the fluid via the kidneys. So drinking lots of water, from whatever source, will cause mineral depletion. Incidentally, the mineral depletion caused by soft drinks which use distilled water in their manufacture is due to the high amount of phosphate they contain, not the distilled water.

This argument will be met with “but distilled water is acidic and therefore has greater leaching power.” So a little lesson on acid and alkaline water is called for. Let’s take rain water - this is distilled water; it is formed through a process of evaporation and condensation. As it evaporates it is cleansed of solutes and becomes “soft” but as it falls it and being “empty of solutes” it can take up either acids or alkaline substances as it cleanses the atmosphere. Industrialized countries that burn fossil fuel belch sulphuric acid into the atmosphere; the water picks this up and it falls as acid rain, poisoning the land. Similarly, rain water that falls on limestone will leach calcium and magnesium from the soils and becomes “hard water”. Hard water becomes more alkaline. However, water that runs through soils devoid of limestone will pick up heavy metals such as copper. For those living in “soft water” areas you may notice how the water leaches copper from your pipes leaving a blue discoloration on the porcelain. Very often we see high incidence of heart and kidney disease in soft water areas; it is not the water that causes the problem but the heavy metals it contains.

When you make distilled water it becomes acidic because it is “empty” (devoid of solutes) and can take up carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide, when mixed with water becomes carbonic acid. I’ll deal with the simple fact first; most distillation units have carbon filters and as the distilled water filters through the carbon it picks up carbon. It is no longer “empty” but now contains dissolved carbon solids (often referred to as TDS – total dissolved solids). This means that the water will not take up carbon dioxide as it is no longer empty, therefore distilled water made at home with a proper unit it will not be acidic. But if you don’t have a carbon filter (and I would recommend that you get one) then authors would have us believe that drinking distilled water is akin to drinking acid, and will make the body acidic.

Now for some mathematics. If you are not good at maths then just trust me! We all know that we need to keep the body at a slightly alkaline pH. At pH 7.4 there is 0.0016 mmol of acid in the body. The body produces 10.4 mmol of acid per minute – this is 6,500 times the amount held in the body at pH 7.4! We are net acid producers - this is normal and this is where breathing comes in. Most of the acid formed is carbonic acid, and you guessed it, the lungs get rid of the carbon dioxide as soon as it is made. It is of no burden to the body unless the lungs are impaired. The real acidic burden comes from eating too much protein and leading a stressful lifestyle. The acids produced from these activities are not volatile (cannot be blown off in the breath) but take up to seven days for the kidneys to eliminate. This means that acidity is cumulative and as we age, or if our kidneys become impaired, then the true effects of acidity start to manifest. The bones will take up and buffer acidity in exchange for calcium, and in an acidic environment calcium will precipitate to form stones and crystals and we see hardening of the joints and arteries – this is the result of long-term acidity. Drinking distilled water does not contribute to this in any shape or form.

Finally, we come to the last objection that distilled water is dead. Any water that has undergone any process has lost its vital force to one degree or another. Tap water is not only dead, but heavily contaminated with toxic chemicals. Bottled water undergoes a pasteurisation process before it is commercially available (not to mention the xeno-oestrogens that leach from the plastic bottles). Boiling water to make your tea and coffee “kills” the water. Finding “living water” and drinking it at source is not an option that many have so we are told that the next best option seems to be ‘energizing’ the water with various gadgets and machines that are available today.

What do I recommend? The same as always:

- ▶ Ensure your living nutrients from the food you eat.
- ▶ Don't throw the vegetable cooking water away – or better still use the waterless cooking method.
- ▶ Drink your freshly prepared juices which are full of enzymes and nutrients.
- ▶ If you drink water – make sure it is clean first and foremost and if you wish to energize it – then feel free to do so. Don't overdo drinking of any water – it all leaches minerals. Two litres daily of total fluid (including your vegetable juices) is generally enough.
- ▶ We need to be hydrated – but correctly hydrated. Drinking water may not help you to hydrate if the tissues have lost their ability to “hold” water. If this is the case then you will pass water as quickly as you have drunk it. Eating foods which have a water-holding capacity such as grains and legumes, and for those currently on the Gerson therapy – the pectins in the fruits, vegetables and juices – will help build your hydration capacity as these foods confer the same properties to your own body tissues. Adding salt to water will not re-hydrate the body – it will increase your thirst for more water which you will retain. This is akin to water-logging and when that salt gets into the cells – we all know the story – it acts as an enzyme inhibitor and increases intracellular acidity!