



1700 Diagonal Road, Suite 650  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
Phone: 703-647-4609  
Fax: 703-683-4074  
Web: [www.bottledwater.org](http://www.bottledwater.org)

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Bruce Kelley  
Editor In Chief  
Reader's Digest

Marlisse Cepeda  
Digital Managing Editor  
Reader's Digest – [www.rd.com](http://www.rd.com)

[letters@rd.com](mailto:letters@rd.com)  
[marlisse\\_cepeda@rd.com](mailto:marlisse_cepeda@rd.com)

Dear Mr. Kelley and Ms. Cepeda,

I'm writing in regard to Morgan Cutolo's article "This Is the Safest Bottled Water You Can Buy" ([www.rd.com/health/wellness/safest-bottled-water-brands](http://www.rd.com/health/wellness/safest-bottled-water-brands)) published January 30, 2018, on [www.rd.com](http://www.rd.com). This article contains incorrect information and misinforms your readers about the safety of bottled water.

Ms. Cutolo's article relies solely on information from an unpublished student research project, not a study by Dr. Augusto Robles, DDS, MS, DMD, as she reports. (see attached email from Dr. Robles stating this clarification).

Furthermore, in Ms. Cutolo's article, she writes, "*Many bottled water brands have acidic pH levels and added fluoride, which can be extremely damaging to your teeth.*" This is a patently false statement. The pH levels of bottled water (usually 5 – 8 pH) are typically similar, or in a better range, than other foods and drinks consumed by people every day. The student paper referenced in this article simply measured the pH of several bottled waters and concluded "some commercially available bottled waters have a pH of less than 5.5 which makes them damaging to the enamel and dentin." The study did not provide actual evidence of bottled water causing any erosion. And neither the study, nor Ms. Cutolo's article, points out that consumers drink many other beverages, all of which have a far lower pH value than bottled water:

- Cranberry Juice 2.3 pH
- Gatorade 2.4 pH
- Coke 2.5 pH
- Capri Sun 2.6 pH
- Orange juice 3.3 pH
- Diet Coke 3.4 pH
- Tomato Juice 4.1 pH

(Source: [www.21stcenturydental.com/ph\\_drinks.html](http://www.21stcenturydental.com/ph_drinks.html))

Another consideration is that while the water is being consumed, only momentary exposure occurs, which is then diluted by saliva. This does not allow ample time for any tooth enamel erosion to occur. However, this is not the case with sugary drinks, which typically erode enamel in two ways: (1) initial acidity of the beverage and (2) later acidity formed by conversion of sugar into acids in the mouth.

In addition, Ms. Cutolo's statement regarding added fluoride in bottled water being damaging to teeth is also misleading your readers. Bottled water products with "added" fluoride must, by law, be labeled as "added fluoride." The fact is fluoride is present in many foods and beverages, and almost all toothpaste contains fluoride. Too much exposure to fluoride can lead to a condition called fluorosis, which results in stains to the teeth. Too little fluoride can cause an increase in dental caries, particularly in children. Consumers (and parents for their children) should therefore look at how much fluoride they are receiving as part of their overall diet and should contact a healthcare or dental-care provider for their recommendation. Not all consumers want fluoride in their bottled water, but for those who do, as we mentioned above, multiple [IBWA member companies produce bottled water with added fluoride](#).

As a packaged food product, bottled water is strictly regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Federal law requires that FDA bottled water regulations be as protective of the public health as standards set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for tap water. In fact, in some cases, such as lead, the FDA bottled water regulations are more stringent than the EPA tap water standards.

You've probably heard by now that in 2016 bottled water outsold carbonated soft drinks (by volume) to become the No.1 packaged beverage in the United States. Americans are making great efforts to live a better lifestyle by choosing healthier foods and beverages, and drinking water – tap, bottled, or filtered – should be encouraged. With the high rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and lead-contaminated tap water in our on-the-go society, bottled water provides a safe, healthy, convenient beverage choice. Discouraging people from choosing this healthy drink option is not in the public interest.

We do appreciate your interest in America's No.1 packaged beverage, but we also kindly ask that you update your article to more accurately reflect the facts about bottled water.

Sincerely,

Jill Culora  
Vice President of Communications  
International Bottled Water Association