

ALKALINE WATER: BENEFICIAL OR BOGUS?

We let a panel of experts weigh in on this.

THE EXPERTS



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➔ WHAT IS ALKALINE WATER?

Alkaline water can be found in bottled spring or mineral water. Natural spring water passes through rocks and soil and picks up various minerals, which affects its pH. Another type of alkaline water is produced by an electrical ioniser, a device that changes the chemical composition of water to increase its pH so it's more alkaline. In theory, proponents of alkaline water believe it works by making your body less acidic, which leads to better health. However, there have not been any studies that can verify these claims.

➔ WHO BENEFITS?

According to a study published in *The Annals of Otolaryngology, Rhinology & Laryngology*, drinking water with a pH of at least 8.8 may have therapeutic benefits for patients with reflux diseases. This provides a temporary relief for acid reflux, but is not a cure.

Some marketers claim that alkaline water can reduce cancer risks or help to fight cancer, as some chemotherapeutic agents are believed to be more effective in an alkaline environment. However, there are no clinical trials yet to establish these benefits.

← WHO SHOULD AVOID?

People with impaired renal (kidney) function, such as renal failure or renal diseases, should avoid alkaline water due to accumulation of the minerals from alkaline water in their bodies. Impaired renal function leads to impaired renal excretory functions.

← THE BOTTOM LINE

Currently, there is no way of knowing with 100 per cent certainty whether drinking alkaline water will truly benefit your health. Alkaline water may provide some health benefits to some people, such as those with acid reflux. If you don't suffer from kidney problems, drinking natural alkaline water (spring water or naturally occurring mineral water) is generally considered safe. However, studies have not produced any hard evidence to support the purported benefits of artificial (ionised) alkaline water. Until there is, what's more important than what type of water to drink is to keep yourself well hydrated. *tm*



BESIDES DRINKING ALKALINE WATER, HERE ARE OTHER WAYS YOU CAN GO ABOUT MAINTAINING A HEALTHY BODY:

1) Alkaline diet

Proponents believe that eating an alkaline diet also serves the purpose of 'neutralising' the body's pH level. Meat, poultry, fish, dairy, eggs, grains and alcohol are considered acidic food. An alkaline diet, on the other hand, includes fruits, nuts, legumes and vegetables. You could also include more wheatgrass, barley grass, kelp, cayenne, chlorella and spirulina in your diet.

2) Supplements

Calcium, potassium and magnesium are important alkaline minerals that enable your body to carry out normal bodily functions. If you are not consuming enough alkaline minerals, then your body has to pull them from your bones, teeth and organs. This can compromise the immune system, causing fatigue and making you vulnerable to viruses and disease.