

I Have Municipal Water ... **Why Would I Want a Point-of-Use Filter?**

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Benefits of going beyond municipal drinking water

How many times have you been asked this question? Sometimes in the U.S. it seems that consumers who receive their water through municipal water systems have the best of all worlds—clean, safe and affordable drinking water brought to their homes on a consistent basis.

There is no doubt that municipal drinking water systems are one of the most beneficial improvements a society can make.

For the discriminating consumer, there are ways municipal drinking water can be improved beyond the convenience of tap delivery. One of the most common ways to improve municipal drinking water is to add a filter to reduce chlorine taste and odor,

which may be in the supply as a result of municipal treatment processes.

People with a refined sense of taste and smell are often the first to notice the odor of a disinfectant; others who come into contact with the water may notice a difference in how a municipally supplied water source may feel on their skin or may interact with their hair coloring. Several taste- and odor-reducing filters and filtration systems are available for easy installation, such as faucet-mounted units, as well as undersink and showerhead filtration systems.

Consistent Quality

Consumers receiving municipal drinking water may notice changes over time in the water's appearance and taste unrelated to disinfectants. Sources for municipal drinking water systems may go through seasonal changes—spring-season runoff, summer-season algae blooms or autumn's annual foliage drop may affect taste and appearance. A point-of-use (POU) filtration system may also reduce such seasonal effects on municipal supplies.

Besides taste and odor related to the disinfection process or seasonal effects on supplies, there are other reasons



a consumer on a municipal drinking water system may want a POU filtration system.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulates disinfection byproducts through the Stage 2 Disinfectants and Disinfection Byproducts Rule. Disinfectants such as chlorine can react with plant materials in drinking water to form byproducts such as trihalomethanes, haloacetic acids, chlorite and bromate. The rule is in place to limit exposure to these byproducts. The EPA estimates that more than 260 million individuals are exposed to disinfection byproducts, which can cause cancer or other reproductive and developmental health risks. Consumers interested in reducing their possible exposure to these byproducts can use a POU filtration system that is specifically designed and certified to reduce these contaminants.

A consumer's home may also impact the taste or otherwise affect their drinking water. Older houses may still have lead pipes or fixtures



that have lead parts, or be serviced by lead service lines, and lead can leach into the drinking water. Alternatively, buildup within a house's plumbing can add a taste to water; corroded pipes or water with a high mineral or sediment content can lead to significant buildup of flavor-imparting substances. A POU filtration system certified to reduce lead would be beneficial for consumers with lead pipe/fixture issues, while a taste and odor filtration system may enhance water traveling through corroded and sludge-filled pipes.

There are several reasons why con-

sumers with municipally supplied water would want to have POU filtration systems. The message of improving taste appears to have gotten through to the mainstream, generally accepted by the consuming public with several choosing to buy bottled water rather than drink their tap water.

Even beyond taste issues, there still appears to be a large untapped market in the U.S. for POU filters for use on municipally supplied drinking water, as evidenced recently by the 2007 Washington, D.C., lead exposure news. POU filters should have a strong future with continued growth in the U.S. market. *wqp*

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