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*Waterwise®*, a company that produces and sells steam water distillers, commissioned this piece in response to recent articles saying steam distilled water does not have the proper pH for our bodies. It was a rewrite of a scientific document that their average end user had difficulty understanding.

## What's the Story?

If you are reading this article, you are probably one of the growing number of people in this country who have begun to take their health and well-being into their own hands. Great! Good for you! But it's not an easy task. There is so much information so easily accessible on the Internet these days. So much of it is confusing, or even downright contradictory, that it's hard to know what to believe. To further complicate the issue, many "informational articles" are not based on any solid scientific evidence at all. They are usually based on sound logic, but there's a many of these articles do have some truth in them, they are usually missing pertinent facts. Worse yet, many of them target our fears, making them seem more urgent than they really are.

One of the latest in this category is articles that tell us not to drink steam distilled water because it is too acidic. That is, its pH level is too low. Because the body is already acidic, we should balance that by drinking more alkaline water. Not to despair, though. The writers of these articles have the solution: Alkalizing drops, or an alkalizing machine, or some other fix-it. The true parts of this argument are that our bodies are a largely acidic environment, and that a more alkaline diet is probably a good idea. It is true that high acid levels in the body can be a culprit in joint pain, fatigue, frequent colds

and infections, osteoporosis, acid reflux and heartburn, and the list goes on and on. But is stopping the consumption of pure, clean steam distilled water going to help?

First, think about the reasons you started drinking steam distilled water (and from now on, we're just going to call it distilled water) in the first place. Think of the options that are available to you. In an ideal world, pure spring water would be a great choice. But it's been a very long time since the earth has had stores of pure, clean spring water. There's a lovely picture of a pristine mountain stream flowing crisply over rocks and through vegetation. But how many jets have flown over it with their exhaust fumes? How much factory run-off has invaded it? What about acid rain? So, maybe you should stick with distilled water and get some of those alkalizing drops. Or buy an alkalizing machine to treat the water. Or buy alkalized water.

### **What Is pH?**

It is the measure of how many hydrogen ions are in a substance. Water –  $H_2O$  – breaks down into hydrogen ( $H^+$ ) ions and hydroxyl ( $OH^-$ ) ions. Assuming the ideal balance to be neutral, water should have a pH of 7.0 on the scale of 0–14. More hydrogen ions, and the pH drops, showing the substance to be more acidic. Less hydrogen ions, and the resulting higher pH reflects the increased alkalinity. But normal, healthy blood is not a neutral 7.0; it has a pH of 7.35–7.45. Therefore, the logic goes, we should drink water that is a little bit alkaline rather than perfectly neutral.

Low pH has been found to be a factor in just about every disease you can name, from cancer to arthritis to the common cold. So, it does seem reasonable to suggest we try to keep our bodies more alkaline. However, there is conflicting evidence regarding the body's ideal pH level, despite the pH of blood. Dr. Carey Reams, who holds PhDs in biophysics and biochemistry among others, is credited with helping over 99% of the people he has treated, many of whom had cancer, simply by altering their diets. He has

found evidence suggesting that the ideal pH level is not 7.0, but rather 6.4, slightly acidic.\* So, maybe we're not supposed to try to raise our body's pH levels.

### **Is Distilled Water Really Acidic?**

Testing water as soon as possible after distillation will usually give you a slightly acidic reading, about 6.5. As soon as distilled water is exposed to air, the pH drops because it absorbs the CO<sup>2</sup> in the air. Movement, however minimal, will aerate the water even more, lowering the pH more. Does that mean that simply, say, swirling the distilled water makes it more corrosive? No. It means the pH level of distilled water fluctuates easily.

The same cannot be said of other, less pure waters, and this is critical to the understanding of this whole issue. Distilled water has virtually no dissolved particles in it to buffer the affects of added substances that influence the pH level; less pure waters do. If you were to take a dry toothpick and dip it in a container of baking soda – a highly alkaline substance – and put it into a liter of distilled water, the pH could rise up to 2 full points. Putting that same amount of baking soda into tap water would produce almost no measurable change.† Think of the story of the princess and the pea: The greater the purity, the greater the sensitivity.

### **Why Not Use Alkalizing Drops Or Treatments Anyway?**

Because there is no evidence they actually do anything. Like the claims that distilled water will leach your body of minerals because it does not contain any, it seems reasonable, but is without any supporting data whatsoever.

### **So, What *Do* We Do To Raise Our pH Levels?**

After all, one of the kernels of truth we started with was that low pH levels in the body can be injurious to our health. Well, it's not *quite* as simple as adding a few drops of something to our water, but it's too much harder. You just have to watch your diet.

While different sources further complicate the issue by listing different foods as acidic or alkaline, one thing seems fairly certain: Processed sugars, animal proteins, and alcohol reduce the body's pH. Beyond that, if you're serious about this, contact us and we will send you some litmus paper, and you can see for yourself how different foods affect your body's pH.

So, I guess it's a good thing you've decided to take your health into your own hands, isn't it? This is something you *absolutely can control*. As with any lifestyle change, try to make it a gradual, gentle change. It's not a good idea to shock your body by, say, suddenly cutting out all acidic foods in one grand sweep. Treat your body with respect and it will take good care of you.

*\*<http://www.chelationtherapyonline.com/articles/p149.htm>*

*†<http://en.allexperts.com/q/Fish-1472/Distilled-water.htm>*