

# How clean is my drinking water?

There are many things that affect our drinking water. Climate change may soon become a threat, similar to how the floods in Pakistan where microbiological organisms became a serious health risk. Another risk is the increase of humus content and the leaching of chemicals from landfills that can alter the water's nutrient content. Although these are risks, the current threat to our drinking water comes from increasing levels of chemicals and pharmaceutical metabolites that can be found in our drinking water.

The purity of our drinking water is an issue that affects everyone who values their health. How will a lifelong exposure to small amounts of pharmaceutical metabolites affect the children who are growing up today?

We don't know yet because this is a new phenomenon.

In 2001 researchers sounded the alarm having noticed significant levels of estrogen and pharmaceutical metabolites in the sewage. They were not considered harmful as they do not provide pharmacological effects but it is not known what a lifelong intake of low concentrations involves.

The Stockholm County Council Environmental Report (2009) shows that levels of certain chemicals and pharmaceuticals are still rising in the waters of Stockholm. Many pharmaceuticals are able to pass through the sewage plants and can be found in the lakes around Stockholm. The first environmental impacts that were noticed were sex changes in fish.

Studies from other areas show that very low concentrations of polluting chemicals, such as pesticides and substances from plastics, can disrupt human development at a cellular level. (Source: Pharmaceuticals in the environment, Pharmacy Pharmaceutical Paper, 2009-2010)

Emissions of 14 environmentally harmful pharmaceuticals into the Stockholm water was lower in 2009 but the levels of the following eight investigated compounds has risen since 2005: Ciprofloxacin (antibiotic), Citalopram (depression), Furosemide (diuretic), Metronidazole (antibiotic), Oxytetracycline (antibiotic), Salbutamol (asthma), Tetracycline (antibiotic), Warfarin (blood thinner).

The substances that are measured are those that have a negative effect on the environment, those that have the biggest sales, and those that are not broken down by sewage treatment.

What about the rest of the pharmaceuticals and chemicals currently in use?

It seems that our politicians do not believe that clean water is important to us. It costs about 1000 SEK per person per year to clean our drinking water centrally. An effective home water purifier costs around 2000 SEK. Anyone can figure out that the central water treatment is the most sensible choice.

Ake Wennmalm, environmental director for Stockholm, finds it difficult to implement effective water treatment laws because many politicians don't consider clean drinking water to be sufficiently exciting. Is this really true today? How important is clean water for you and your family? How important is it for the kids growing up today?

**What can we do?**

Turn over...

# What you can do...

- Join the Facebook Cause: Clean drinking water at <http://www.causes.com/causes/533343>
- Sign the petition “Clean our drinking water” that will be handed over to the Government and Party heads <http://namninsamling.se/index.php?sida=2&nid=4980>
- Contact your municipality and ask to see an analysis report of pharmaceuticals and chemical residue in the local drinking water. Ask for a copy of the report.
- If the municipality has not done this type of test, ask them to do so.
- If the result shows that there are chemical and pharmaceutical residues in the water, ask to see the plan to provide cleaner water in your municipality.
- We need to let our politicians know that clean water is one of the most important issues for us consumers. Tell your local newspaper and politicians about your investigations.
- Are you worried about the family’s drinking water? Bottled water is not a good environmental choice nor a healthy alternative as chemicals leach into the water from the plastic. Get an effective water purifier. Ask the manufacturer for an analysis of water purifier you intend to buy. This is only a temporary solution – the most important thing is to clean municipal water, so that all may benefit from the outcome. There are many on the market - see <http://www.yellow-canaries.com/links/water>.

## *Clean our drinking water*

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