

WCBS-TV 2 News

Seen At 11: Flavored, Fortified And Fizzy Water — Is It All Safe?

High Calories, Synthetic Chemicals Are To Be Found In Some Products

Sin Up

NEW YORK (CBS 2) — When it comes to drinking water, it is no longer just a choice between bottled or tap – there is flavored, fizzy and even vitamin-infused water.

But as CBS 2's Alice Gainer reported, some question whether all of the choices are [safe](#). Many people like the idea of some pizzazz in their water, rather than plain old tap or bottled water.

So they go with water with a carbonated kick – itself a classic going back centuries. They also might try the more recent innovations of flavored water, or water with claims of [health benefits](#).

But there may be some less-than-welcome aspects to those alternative water beverages. Some turned out to be loaded with sugar. One flavored water contained 32 grams – almost as much as a can of soda – and packs a 120-calorie punch in 20 ounces.

“Different studies, depending on what you look at, estimate that if you consume one of these waters every day, you can go on to have anywhere from a 20- to 50-pound weight gain for a year,” said Dr. Ellen Gutkin of New York [Hospital](#) Queens

In addition to obesity, another agreement – high-fructose sweetener – has also been linked to diabetes and liver disease.

Dr. Gutkin also advised looking out for preservatives, sodium, and triglycerides by reading labels carefully. And she suggested a rule of thumb.

“If it sounds like it comes from a chemistry lab, it's probably not a healthy water,” Gutkin said. But once you start drinking the waters, it may not be so easy to stop. Consumers of the drinks can actually get hooked.

“We're absolutely fooling our taste buds into craving, and almost requiring, in some cases, a flavoring or a particular sensation when it comes to carbonation,” said endocrinologist Dr. Joseph Pinzone. “It is allowing them to form habits which actually affect the brain and how we crave things.”

But experts said if you still crave a flavor, a good alternative is to add it to regular water yourself.

“You can squeeze a lemon, squeeze an orange, limes — the alternatives are endless, and you would know what is in it,” Gutkin said.

The bottom line, according to experts, is not to give up on regular water and to drink special waters in moderation.

“If you’re drinking any single drink once or in small amounts, it’s unlikely to have major healthrisks[↗] to you,” Pinzone said.

Doctors advise that we need about 8 cups of fluid a day to stay hydrated. That includes water and food, which **accounts**[↗] for about 25 percent of our daily liquid intake.