

Alkaline Water. Lots of Money but no Evidence

By Naomi Thomas,

Everyone knows that drinking water is good for you, but could there be a way to make it even better?

Alkaline water has been praised by celebrities such as Beyoncé and [Miranda Kerr](#). It's claimed to have a multitude of health benefits, including [weight loss](#), [clear skin](#) and even fighting cancer.

Purportedly, "if things are alkaline, then that helps to [neutralize] the acid in your bloodstream, and that's associated, theoretically ... with certain health benefits," said [Lisa Drayer](#), a registered dietitian and CNN contributor.



Benefits of water: Are you getting enough fluids to stay healthy?

So, what is alkaline water? And is it really better than the boring water we've been drinking all along?

Alkaline water is water that has a higher pH level than tap water. Seven is a neutral pH. The higher the pH level the more alkaline, or basic, it is. The lower the pH level, the more acidic it is.

"Tap water has a pH of roughly around 7, and alkaline water is closer to about 8 or 9," said [Malina Malkani](#), a registered dietician nutritionist and spokeswoman for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. "Alkaline compounds are salts and metals that, when added to water, make it more basic."

Illnesses are the most common causes for [changes in the blood pH](#) level. Diabetes can make your blood more acidic, whereas kidney problems can make it more alkaline. Certain foods, including dairy products, can make also your blood more acidic.

Where does it come from?

Natural alkaline water can occur when water picks up minerals from areas such as springs, when it passes over rocks in the environment.

It is more common for companies to manufacture alkaline water and sell it at grocery stores or through online retailers. Some brands focus specifically on alkaline water, such as [Essentia](#); others, such as [Smart Water](#), offer specific alkaline products as part of a broader lineup.



A New Year, new food resolution: Water

You can also make your own alkaline water with simple ingredients such as [lemon juice](#) and/or [baking soda](#).

Products such as [water ionizers](#) can also be used to make it more alkaline by using electricity to separate the molecules in the water into acidic and alkaline, and then the acidic water is siphoned away.

Is alkaline water good for you?

That's still being decided.

"There's really not a lot of evidence either supporting of the health claims that are made about alkaline water or refuting the claims," Malkani said.

"It's one of those fads that people are making all kinds of claims about, you know, 'It's a miracle cure, and it's a curative for so many different things, and it can boost your metabolism and prevent cancer,' and there's just a lot we don't know," she added.



Fad diets and trendy workouts: what works?

[Drayer](#) had a stronger line: "My main message is that alkaline water is just another popular nutrition trend that lacks solid scientific evidence." She noted the similarities between the alkaline water trend and the alkaline diet, both of which are popular online and with celebrities.

The alkaline diet claims that by "avoiding acid-producing foods, like meats, dairy, eggs, sugars and processed foods, and consuming foods that allow your body to become more alkaline, including fruits, vegetables and soy foods, you can lose weight and improve your health," Drayer said.

She pointed out that much of the [research](#) on alkaline water has been [animal-based](#), meaning the possible effects on humans are not yet supported by science.

"Even when it shows a possible benefit for acid reflux, it's not something that clinicians are necessarily recommending," Drayer said.

Malkani noted that "if all the body systems are functioning as they should be, the blood pH isn't going to vary too much. So it's a misconception that you can, by drinking an alkaline water, drastically affect the pH of the body."

Very high alkaline levels in the bloodstream could lead to skin irritation and gastrointestinal issues, Drayer said. She added that this could happen "if your bloodstream is very alkaline."

However, both she and Malkani emphasized that the body is well-equipped to handle both acidic and alkaline foods and beverages.

"Whether you drink or consume a highly acidic or highly alkaline food or beverage, it's going to be neutralized, especially in your digestive system, before it hits your bloodstream," Malkani said.

Both Malkani and Drayer support a simpler way of getting these supposed health benefits. "It's just a trend that people think is going to make the healthier, feel better, have more energy," Drayer said, "but plain drinking water does a great job of that and will certainly keep you just as hydrated."