



Enhanced Waters: Super Drinks or Super Scam?

The labels claim to give us energy, improve our concentration and even boost our immune systems. Full of vitamins and minerals, sometimes even protein and fiber, what's not to love about these beverages? As a whole, Americans are not getting the ideal amounts of vitamins and minerals in their diet. Could these enhanced waters, such as Glaceau Vitamin Waters, Special K20 Protein Waters, SoBe Life Waters, and Propel Fitness Waters be the answer to our problem? Survey says-most likely not.

Sneaking in the Sugars

Everyone knows what to expect when they pop the top of a soda can and take a drink. A syrupy sweet fizzy mouthful that is hands-down a diet-buster to anyone watching their weight. It's no secret that soda pop is high in added sugars. But what about enhanced waters? It says *water* on the label-how bad could it possibly be? A typical bottle of Vitamin Water contains about 50 calories and 13 grams of sugar per serving. Not too terrible sounding right? Unless of course you are one of the millions of Americans that consume the entire bottle of Vitamin Water. Did you know that each bottle contains 2 ½ servings? This means that if you drink the entire bottle you are taking in 125 calories and 32 grams of sugar, pretty close to the amount of sugar found in the average soda-and you thought you were making a smarter choice going with something that is marketed as water.

Vanishing Vitamins

Many of us are looking for easy ways to get more vitamins into our diets. Makers of enhanced waters are aware of this fact and lure us in by the promise of providing us health-boosting vitamins. The problem with this is that the vitamins in these enhanced waters are usually B vitamins, the ones that we easily get enough of just from eating a bowl of cereal in the morning. What happens to the extra B vitamins that we take in from drinking enhanced waters? The body can only absorb so much B vitamins everyday, therefore the excess goes right down the toilet in the form of urine-just like the money you spent on the beverage. So what about the enhanced waters that provide more than just B vitamins? For example, SoBe Lifewaters market a water that claims to boost our immunity by providing us with added Vitamin A and E. The low-down on this is that our bodies cannot absorb these vitamins in this kind of a beverage. Vitamin A and E are fat-soluble vitamins, which mean that in order for our bodies to absorb them properly we must consume fat at the same time. Now who wants to buy water that contains fat?

Flush-there goes more vitamins down the toilet.

Harmful Herbs

Energy© is a flavor of Vitamin Water that claims to "help you shine through those wind-sucking workouts". How does it do this exactly? This particular enhanced water contains the herb Guarana, which contains very high doses of caffeine. For some people this herb can help to wake us up and get us through a workout but for others it can be very dangerous to their health. In fact there have



been several studies that have indicated that Guarana has caused serious problems such as heart rhythm abnormalities and increases in blood pressure as well as putting people at increased risks for stroke, hemorrhage, myocardial infarction, and sudden death. That's a lot to take in from a beverage that calls itself "water".

As consumers we must educate ourselves, and not fall for misleading products. To accomplish this we must look beyond the front-label and the enticing health claims and read the nutrition labels. Oftentimes we can save ourselves money and extra calories by getting creative at home. Squeezing some lemon juice into our tap-water or adding fresh fruits such as cucumbers or berries can provide us with the water and extra vitamins we need with no added sugars or harmful herbs. This can keep our bodies hydrated and our money in our wallets where it belongs.

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