

WARNING: Is Tap Water Safe for Your Dog?

By: PetPlace Veterinarians

Drugs in drinking water

Recently, an article published by the Associated Press (AP) exploited the presence of several drugs in drinking water from various locations around the country. According to the AP, they tested water that supplies over 41 million Americans during a 5-month survey. The residue of several drugs including both nonprescription drugs and prescription drugs were found.



Nonprescription drugs such as Tylenol and ibuprofen as well as prescription drugs such as sex hormones, antibiotics, antidepressants, and other drugs have been found in the water at several water facilities across the country. Of the 62 water sources, 28 were tested. Of those, 25 of the 28 tested positive for drug residue including 24 large metropolitan areas. Some tested positive for multiple drugs.

The amounts of drug residue in the water were very small and much less than a therapeutic dose of medication but this raised concern regarding the safety of the water. Is the water safe to drink? What happens with consumption of the water over time? The water utility companies claim this water is safe. The U.S. government does not have requirements for safe drug levels in the water.

Drugs get into the water as water is recycled. People take drugs of which some is absorbed and the rest is eliminated out of the body. As these drugs are eliminated in urine, the residue ends up back into the water supply. Water purification systems eliminate some but not all drugs from the water.

What does this mean to our health? No one really seems to know. Water plants indicate the water is safe. Several doctors have been quoted as not being quite as sure. Drinking this water containing drug residue over a long period of time could have some affects but it has not been studied.

Of course, water safety issues have only addressed humans...but what about dogs and cats? How does water traced with drug residues affect their health? According to veterinarian Dr. Debra Primovic from Columbus, Ohio, "Water containing drugs in the drinking water of pets concerns me. We have no way to know how this will affect their long term health. Until this is further studied, we cannot be sure."

What can you do? No one seems sure. Dr. Primovic says, "Until more information is available and research is done, no one will probably be able to give you a final answer".

What do we recommend? Filter your water. There is controversy regarding if filtering will eliminate all or any of the drugs but until we know for sure, it isn't going to hurt anything. The purity of bottled water probably varies and its purification is not known. It will be good for both you and your pets.

We will work hard to keep you informed as more information is available.

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