



FEDERATION OF AMERICAN CONSUMERS AND TRAVELERS

## - NEWS RELEASE -

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Which is Safer -- Bottled Water or Water from the Tap?**

EDWARDSVILLE, IL, January 11, 2010 - Vicki Rolens, Managing Director of the Federation of American Consumers (FACT), has sought information concerning the relative safety and purity of bottled water.

“Bottled water has become extremely popular in recent years,” says Rolens, “which has inevitably led to many questions about its advantages and disadvantages, and we were hoping to find some definitive answers for our members.”

According to the Food and Drug Administration, there are seven ways bottled water can be labeled:

1. *Artesian Water / Artesian Well Water:* Bottled water from a well that taps a confined aquifer (a water-bearing underground layer of rock or sand) in which the water level stands at some height above the top of the aquifer.
2. *Drinking Water:* Drinking water is another name for bottled water. Accordingly, drinking water is water that is sold for human consumption in sanitary containers and contains no added sweeteners or chemical additives (other than flavors, extracts or essences). It must be calorie-free and sugar-free. Flavors, extracts or essences may be added to drinking water, but they must comprise less than one-percent-by-weight of the final product or the product will be considered a soft drink. Drinking water may be sodium-free or contain very low amounts of sodium.
3. *Mineral Water:* Bottled water containing not less than 250 parts per million total dissolved solids may be labeled as mineral water. Mineral water is distinguished from other types of bottled water by its constant level and relative proportions of mineral and trace elements at the point of emergence from the source. No minerals can be added to this product.
4. *Purified Water:* Water that has been produced by distillation, deionization, reverse osmosis or other suitable processes and that meets the definition of purified water in the United States Pharmacopoeia may be labeled as purified bottled water.
5. *Sparkling Water:* Water that after treatment and possible replacement with carbon dioxide contains the same amount of carbon dioxide that it had at emergence from the source. (An important note: soda water, seltzer water and tonic water are not considered bottled waters. They are regulated separately, may contain sugar and calories, and are considered soft drinks.)
6. *Spring Water:* Bottled water derived from an underground formation from which water flows naturally to the surface of the earth. Spring water must be collected only at the spring or through a bore hole tapping the underground formation and the spring. Spring water collected with the use of an external force must be from the same underground stratum as the spring and must have all the physical properties, before treatment, and be of the same composition and quality as the water that flows naturally to the surface of the earth.

7. *Well Water*: Bottled water from a hole bored, drilled or otherwise constructed in the ground which taps the water of an aquifer.

Rolens says that the FDA regulates parts of the bottled-water industry (if the water is produced and sold within the same state, it is exempted from regulation), whereas the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) controls community tap water supplies. The two agencies have established certain testing and purity standards, but those standards differ from one another.

“Bottom line, there is no single source we’ve been able to find which provides a definitive comparison of impurities between bottled and tap water. Tap water, of course, varies from community to community -- bottled water varies from producer to producer -- so there may never be a really good answer to the question of whether to drink from bottles or from the tap.”

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This news release has been issued by the Federation of American Consumers and Travelers (FACT), a consumer organization formed under the not-for-profit corporation laws of the District of Columbia in 1984. FACT serves more than 1 million consumers nationwide. Additional information on FACT may be found in the Encyclopedia of Associations, and by visiting the association's Web site ([www.usafact.org](http://www.usafact.org)). Informative, unbiased news bulletins are regularly disseminated by FACT to help its members remain current on matters which might seriously impact their lives. The association does not offer support to -- and does not receive support from -- any political party or movement. In addition to publishing consumer-related reports, the association provides more than 30 benefits for its members, ranging from medical insurance and dental discounts to prescription drug savings and scholarships. FACT’s administrative office is located at 318 Hillsboro Avenue, Edwardsville, IL 62025