

WHO report summary:

The World Health Organization has issued a report on “Nutrients in water”. This report was issued in Nov. of 2005. The type of water systems cited as producing “Low-Mineral Water” include: Reverse Osmosis; Water Softeners; De-Ionizers; De-Salinization equipment; and Distilling systems. In the report no distinction is made between “naturally soft” water

This report concludes that “Hard Water” is beneficial to the cardiovascular, and cerebrovascular systems and that “Soft Water” increases both the incidence and mortality rate from these two conditions. The report also links “Soft Water” to Types 1 and 2 Diabetes, low birth weight, reduced cognitive function, and Bladder cancer. For the purposes of this summary we will only discuss the cardiovascular consequences since these two issues were the major focus of the report.

To quote from page 93, subchapter V, ***“Hardness Good or Softness bad” of the report, “Several researchers have shown inverse associations between hard water and IHD risk. Such epidemiologic associations, however, cannot distinguish between the prospect of something harmful in soft water or something protective in hard water. Experimental results would support the latter hypothesis, as they indicated that calcium (and/or magnesium) can be protective against heart disease.”***

This indicates that there is no question as to the consequences of using of soft water. The only question is whether it is the beneficial effects of “Hard Water” or detrimental effects from the use of “Soft Water”. For practical purposes, the difference is moot.

Chapter 7 of the report titled **“MINERAL ELEMENTS RELATED TO CARDIOVASCULAR HEALTH”** which begins on page 92 concludes that, ***“We conclude that hard water is good because it contains minerals valuable in themselves and because these nutrients can decrease impact of toxic elements in the environment.”***

***“To minimize heart disease risk, the ideal water should contain sufficient calcium and magnesium to be moderately hard. No effort should be made to eliminate trace elements such as copper and iron where these elements are in short dietary supply.”***

The above statement is quite clear. Water with calcium and magnesium reduces the risk of heart disease. Water without these minerals increases the risk of heart disease. There can be no other way to interpret these statements. As Dr. Bob Martin, noted health expert, put it on one of his radio shows, ***“Soft Water is Hard on your health.”***

The report goes beyond just drinking water and includes cooking water. On page 154 of the report subchapter 4 ***“High loss of calcium, and magnesium and other essential elements in food prepared in low-mineral water”*** contains the following statement: ***“When used for cooking, soft water was found to cause substantial losses of all essential elements from food (vegetables, meat, cereal ). Such losses may reach up to 60% for magnesium and calcium or even more for some other microelements (e.g. copper 66%, manganese 70%, cobalt 86%). In contrast, when hard water is used for***

*cooking, the loss of these elements is much lower and in some cases even higher calcium content was reported in food as a result of cooking”.*

*“Since most nutrients are ingested with food, the use of low mineral water for cooking and processing food may cause a marked deficiency in total intake of some essential elements that was much higher than expected with the use of such water for drinking only.*

This portion of the report tells us that not only does “Soft Water” reduce your intake of Calcium and magnesium because it does not contain these minerals, but “soft Water” will actually leach significant quantities of these two minerals from your food, further reducing your intake. What the study does not report is, where else does “soft water” or low mineral water leach the minerals from.

The conclusions drawn in Chapter Twelve, “**HEALTH RISKS FROM DRINKING DEMINERALISED WATER**” are particularly pointed. The conclusions contain the following statements: *“The issue (low mineral water) is relevant not only where drinking water is obtained by desalination (if not adequately re-mineralized) but also where home water treatment or central water treatment reduces the content of important minerals and low-mineral bottled water is consumed”*

The third paragraph in the “Conclusion” portion of this chapter, page 158, opens with the statement,

*“De-mineralized water that has not been re-mineralized, or low-mineral content water – in the light of the absence or substantial lack of essential minerals in it – is not considered ideal drinking water, and therefore, its regular consumption may not be providing adequate levels of some beneficial nutrients.*

Possibly the most telling statement is contained in the fourth paragraph of the conclusions in Chapter Twelve in the following statement. *“Sufficient evidence is now available to confirm the health consequences from drinking water deficient in calcium or magnesium. Many studies have shown that higher water magnesium is related to decreased risks for CVD and especially for sudden death from CVD.”*

Again I want to reiterate that this summary has focused on the Cardiovascular issues related to the drinking of “Soft Water”. The full text of the report is available and shows links to many other maladies as a result of the consumption of “Soft” or De-mineralized water. What the report did not take into consideration was the effect of skin absorption of de-mineralized water. The National Academy of Sciences has written extensively not only establishing what is absorbed through the pores of the skin but even the rate of absorption. What potential consequences are there for de-mineralized or low mineral content water that we absorb? Remember the results of cooking food in de-mineralized water?

This is one of those areas where each of us must draw their own conclusions. For myself, I have formed an educated opinion, have you?