Water Fantasy

The Winning Ways of Water
Look What They Add to Our Water

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They tell us that old-fashioned beer steins were made with hollow handles or rims. The idea was for the thirsty imbiber to blow through them and to make a sound like a whistle. Thus alerted, the bartender hurried to set up another round of drinks. Thus the expression wet your whistle.

Interesting.

Equally intriguing is the current fad for doctored drinks. Health food outlets all over are swamped with glass and plastic bottles, filled with waters, all supposed to slake your thirst while ratcheting up your health, energy and well-being. Do they work? Let's take a look.

First, there's the "vitamin waters" that subsume liberal amounts of vitamins like C, the Bs, and even E. You gulp the water and take in the vitamins, expecting a boost in energy of virility. Then they throw in a pinch or so of herbs, with their added mystique and--presto--your thirst is quenched and you are renewed. One variety, recently reviewed by your HealthWise reporter is specifically brewed for "balance" with its added zinc, calcium and selenium. It's all here in the bottle, and it's sold for tightrope walkers, gymnasts and clowns who ride unicycles. No doubt the PR people have a wobbly sense of humor, because on the label we read, "One sip, swig or gulp may result in boycott of other beverages." What fun!

Consider another with a picture of a jogger on the label, and claims of "miracle water." No vitamins here, and no herbs. This time it's electrolytes--chemicals like potassium, magnesium, calcium and even chromium. "Better than Gatorade," the makers declare. Better because it contains no sugar. And no salt. Both are elements that have no place in one's water supply. Caution to you marathoners -- there's a lot of chromium in this one. Gulped by the gallon it might be more than you need. Much more. But even so, it's probably better than no water at all.

We're not finished yet, for consider this long-necked glass bottle called "Oxygen Water." It's "Spring water turbocharged with pure oxygen." And it is enhanced with five to 10 times the usual amount found "naturally" in pure water. It's good for fresh breath and healthier gums. But that fades in importance to the promised extra energy, increased metabolism and enhanced athletic performance. The nice man in the store promised me that all the extra oxygen would quickly be absorbed from my stomach into the blood stream, and--bingo--I'd be ready for anything. Too bad. Not so. For even if absorbed, the amount would be insignificant as compared with a single gulp of fresh air. "Don't waste your money on 'oxygenated' water" advises the Berkeley Wellness Letter. Reliable physiologists report no increase of oxygen in blood and no improvement in athletic performance.

But, don't we need eight glasses or so of water each day? Yes, pure water, pure and simple.
Additives add little benefit, but do ramp up the cost—entirely unnecessary and possibly even risky.
You can drink to that.

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