

# Specialty Waters

## What You Need to Know

Have you noticed that there are even more types of waters on the market today than there were just a few years ago? The bottled water explosion brought several new categories into the water world, such as sparkling and artesian waters. But just as those are now familiar, there are several others that may have you scratching your head. Do you know the difference between activated and fortified waters? What about herbal waters? Several types under those classifications want your attention. Here is an alphabetical listing for those and many other types, with brief descriptions of each.

- ❖ **Activated waters:** Water where molecules have been electrically charged by a special process. The result is supposed to have curative effects. An unpublished Austrian study found that activated water improves the growth of seedlings germinated under normal conditions and exposed to toxins. Whether it is a benefit to humans is not clear, but there is at least one product available in the form of energized water drops that you add to regular water or teas.
- ❖ **Artesian water:** Water drawn from a well that taps a confined aquifer in which the water stands above the top of the aquifer. It is sometimes called artesian well water.
- ❖ **Distilled water:** Water that is purified and produced by distillation.
- ❖ **Drinking water:** A general term for any water sold for human consumption in sanitary containers. Essentially, it is another name for bottled water. It must be calorie- and sugar-free, and cannot contain any sweeteners or chemical additives. Flavors, extracts, or essences can be added, but must be less than one percent by weight of the final product. Drinking water must be obtained from an approved source and undergo special treatment. It can be drawn from a community water system or municipal source, but must be labeled as such.
- ❖ **Fortified waters:** They feature dissolved vitamins and minerals and have a hint of flavor and sweetness. They are ideal for people who want to drink supplements or drink water during workouts. They are not to be confused with sports drinks that have more carbohydrate energy and higher amounts of electrolytes.
- ❖ **Herbal waters:** Waters that contain popular herbs. They have a hint of flavor, but no sugar, calories, or carbonation. They feature herbs such as echinacea, Ginkgo biloba, Siberian ginseng, ginger, or St. John's wort. This is an ideal option if you want the benefits of medicinal herbs without taking tablets.
- ❖ **Mineral water:** It contains not less than 250 parts per million of total dissolved solids. Minerals in the water must originate from a natural, underground source and no minerals can be added. Some waters are labeled "low mineral content," as they have total dissolved solids below 500 ppm. Waters labeled "high mineral content" contain total dissolved solids above 1500 ppm.
- ❖ **Natural water:** Water in which no artificial or synthetic substances have been added.
- ❖ **Oxygen-enriched waters:** These are said to be enhanced with up to 40 times the normal oxygen concentration found naturally in water. They come flavored and unflavored, and claim to boost energy by increasing oxygen saturation of the red blood cells. However, there is no published medical evidence to back the claim.
- ❖ **Purified water:** Water purified by reverse osmosis, distillation, deionization, or other processes. It is also known as demineralized water.
- ❖ **Sparkling water:** Water that after treatment, and possible replacement of carbon dioxide, contains the same amount of carbon dioxide that it had when it emerged from its source. A common mistake is labeling soda water, seltzer water, and tonic water as sparkling waters. They may contain sugar and calories and are considered soft drinks.
- ❖ **Spring water:** Water derived from an underground formation from which water flows naturally to the earth's surface.
- ❖ **Well water:** Water from a hole bored or drilled in the ground that taps an aquifer. ♦

### Where can I get more information?

For more information on your private water well, contact your local contractor. Also, visit the Web site of the National Ground Water Association, [www.ngwa.org](http://www.ngwa.org), and its site just for well owners, [www.wellowner.org](http://www.wellowner.org).

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