

Beware of water from refrigerator dispensers

I have just finished reading an article from the Associated Press titled *Millions Drink Tainted Water*, and I'm thinking that this is probably about the 100th time I've read such material in the past 10 years.

I think about the many things we have to worry about in the world today and the subject of water keeps coming up. All of the studies done by different groups, universities, scientists, laborato-

ries etc. and I think I'm just a simple guy and all these people involved certainly know a lot more than I do, especially on the subject of water. They can't all be wrong or making up stories that scare the pants off of me.

There has to be some truth in these articles, and maybe there is more than meets the eye. In our home we have a water purification system installed even though we are on city water.

We have filtered water leading to the refrigerator ice maker and water dispenser system on the door. The reason I have this in our home is because I don't trust the water supply in this country. That is not only due to what I have read, but is also attributable to my eyes, nose and taste buds.

The other day we had a problem with the pressure tank that holds some 20 gallons of already pure water ready to use. The owner of the water company came over and changed the tank and we sat down at the kitchen table to shoot the breeze. He told me that he would take a drink of cold water from a refrigerator

APPLIANCE DOCTOR



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here's a guy who has been in the water business for more than 20 years, has a biologist on the pay-

roll and won't drink water from the refrigerator used by millions. Why not was the question.

Folke, I give you his reply almost word for word: "I have taken apart several of the plastic storage tanks located inside the refrigerator, especially those without any kind of line filter, and just looking at these tanks was enough to convince me of the bacteria that is going into a glass of water."

He didn't have to say much more to prompt the writing of this column. I stop and think about the invention of water dispensers on refrigerators and what a beautiful gadget created to help sell a product.

When first brought out to the American public there was no such conversation about in-line filters. Then, it was recommended you buy one from the local hardware store and install it on the water line behind the refrigerator. Not changing the filter is like not changing the batteries in a smoke detector. And if they don't change batteries in a smoke detector, they certainly will not change the water filter.

Then in recent years some manufacturers get smart and installed the water filter right inside the refrigerator section with a warning light that tells you it is full of bacteria and needs to be changed.

The word bacteria keeps coming up in all conversations about refrigerator water dispensing systems. It should be as clear as the nose on your face. It is to me. Let me suggest that if you have this product in your home, install a filter system of some sort. If you need my help then there is a phone number at the end of this column, call me. If you already have a filter system installed then move the water through the product at regular intervals.

You wouldn't drink a glass of water that sat on the kitchen table for three days, would you? Try a little home test with the ice cubes.

Fill a bowl full and let them sit on the kitchen counter for two days. Tell me what the water looks like. Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can be heard Saturday and Sunday on 760 WJR. He is a member and past president of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. His phone number is (313) 873-9789.

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