Dear Alice,

My friend recently bought a water filter. It's purpose is to raise the tap water's pH-level to alkaline level. She claims that alkaline water is good for our bodies because it reduces the acid level in our bodies. Is it true that waters with high alkaline (pH) level are really healthy for the human body? She paid $1000 for this water filter. Is it worth it? Please let me know soon if it's actually good for me, I'm thinking of purchasing one.

Answer
Dear Reader,

Filtered water seems to be all the rage these days? your friend is not alone in her enthusiasm for filters of all types. Filter manufacturers claim that alkaline water, which has a higher pH than regular tap water, can neutralize acid in the blood, offer more energy, speed metabolism, and slow the aging process. While studies have shown that alkaline water can lead to a decrease of bone loss in pre-menopausal women, not enough research has been done on alkalizing water filters to know how effective they are in improving a range of health concerns.

A normal blood pH, the measure of acidity vs. alkalinity, is carefully maintained by various systems of the body to stay between 7.35 and 7.45. This is slightly on the alkaline side of neutral (7 on a scale of 1 to 14). Bones store calcium for the body, and also help to regulate the acidity or alkalinity of the blood. When the blood becomes too acidic from a diet high in refined sugar, flour, or lots of dairy or meat, calcium is drawn from the bones to bring the blood's pH back into the normal range. If the blood stays alkaline from a diet rich in fruits and vegetables (or from alkaline water, as the filter manufactures claim), the bones don't need to cede their calcium to the blood, the theory being that this calcium retention makes bones stronger and more dense. In addition to drinking alkaline water, researchers have found that eating a low-acid diet, that is, a diet full of fruits and vegetables and lower in animal protein and grains than the typical American diet, may lead to stronger bones.

Whether your friend would like to raise her blood alkalinity by shelling out for a filter is up to her. If you don't have extra money to drop on a filter that may or may not be effective, but would like to keep the pH of your blood in check, you could try to increase your consumption of fruits and green veggies and shave down your intake of refined sugars, flours, dairy, and meat. And fill up your water bottle at her house!

Alice!
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