



Is the UAE's Tap Water Safe?

Since its formation around 50 years ago, the United Arab Emirates has advanced to offer some of the highest quality living standards of any country in the world. Dubai and Abu Dhabi, in particular, boast incredible architecture, high wages, advanced infrastructure, superb public transport, political stability and urban safety.

However, the debate over the UAE's tap water continues to rumble on. While the official government line is that tap water is completely safe to drink in the country, many Emiratis and ex-pats still rely on bottled water, with rumours abounding over the detrimental effects that tap water can have. What's the truth of the matter? Is there really something in the water?

Dispelling the myths

Concerns over the healthiness of Emirati tap water are many and varied. From doubts over whether it can cause hair loss and discolouration to the belief that it can dry out the skin and exacerbate the signs of premature aging, people are wary about drinking tap water for a number of different reasons.

However, the science says that these worries are unfounded. "People think that because when they come to the UAE, in the first 12 to 18 months, they have a huge problem with hair [falling out] and they attribute this to the water," [explains Dr Mike Ryan](#), the so-called 'Dubai Hair Doctor'. "There are various factors that are actually causing this – the food, the arid conditions, stress – but the water in your shower is not one of them."

Storage safety

The water itself is rigorously treated before being dispatched to homes and businesses across the country, with the authorities having repeatedly affirmed that it is 100% safe to imbibe. The only problems may arise if the water tank which stores the liquid is not regularly maintained, which should be a minimum of once every six months.

Crucially, the onus rests on the consumer – not the supplier – to ensure their water storage facilities are up to scratch. Given that in a tenant living in an apartment block with thousands of other residents is not in a position to control or even be aware of the condition of their water tank, some people may prefer not to drink that which comes from the tap.



Bottles equally problematic

Wary of tap water, many residents (including the majority of ex-pats) choose to have bottled water delivered to their homes – a service that can be acquired for a reasonable price. However, this may not be an ideal solution either, since water that is stored in plastic receptacles at high temperatures is liable to become contaminated by chemicals and toxins in the plastic itself.

Quite apart from any health concerns, bottled water is also a huge burden on the environment. [Water safety has been an ongoing problem throughout the 2010s](#), but distributing it in small bottles for consumption on an individual basis is unsustainable and inefficient, especially when the vast majority of those bottles are just used once. Therefore, the best option for the eco-conscious Emirati resident is to install a filter in their home and drink directly from the tap, thus achieving the best of all possible worlds.