

My Opinion



Beth Harmen

Bottled water not always healthier

Tap water may be as pure

By BETH HARMEN
Collegian Staff Writer

Despite the tranquil moonlit lakes or cascading waterfalls depicted on many water bottle labels, bottled water is not always healthier or purer than tap water.

"There's no need to spend a lot of money on bottled water if it's no better than your own," said Paul Robillard, assistant professor of agriculture engineering.

In fact many brands rely on city systems for their water, Robillard said.

"About 25 percent of bottled water in the United States is just processed tap water from municipal systems," Robillard said.

Although public water must meet certain state and federal standards, bottled water does not have to meet all of the standards and is not tested as often, Robillard said.

Bottled water can legally contain more toxicants than water that comes from the tap, but "anyone selling a bottled water is going to want to maintain the quality if the company intends to survive," he said.

"Our goal is to get people to examine the water they're drinking," said Martin.

"What we can guarantee is that the sources of water in Pennsylvania are tested two to four times a year for contamination," Robillard said.

But sales of bottled water have quadrupled over the last decade, partly because consumers are



Although most bottled water companies claim their product comes fresh from natural springs this is not always true. About 25 percent of bottled water

from the United States is processed tap water, said Paul Robillard, assistant professor of agriculture engineering.

Collegian Photo/Karrie Hagy

Bulimia is about life, emotions

My best friend was slowly killing herself and there was nothing I could do about it.

It didn't matter that I loved her, or that I was always there to listen.

From the outside, Rebecca seems like one of the luckiest people around. She's captain of an athletic team, has a 3.4 grade point average, and could get a date without even trying. She's young, beautiful and thin. She's everything her parents and friends expect her to be.

But Rebecca's sense of reality was so drastically distorted, that when she received a C on an Econ 2 test, she panicked. She had never gotten a C before.

Not living up to the expectations she set for herself was not acceptable — it could not be tolerated.

A rational person would think, "In the scheme of life, what does this C really matter?" But Rebecca reacted differently.

Rebecca somehow wound up in her dorm room. She didn't remember the walk home, or buying the food except that she had stolen two candy bars.

She locked the door and her ritual began.

One bag of Cool Ranch Doritos, two bags of M&M's, a pack of Twizzlers, 5 Sugar Daddy's, 4 packs of Twinkies, a bag of Oreos and a liter bottle of Coke.

Rebecca didn't even chew the food; it took her one hour to consume over 20,000 calories.

Her binge stopped after self-induced vomiting. And once again she felt like shit.

Binge eating is typically done in secrecy and is not done in response to the sensation of hunger. The abnormal eating may be done in response to anxiety states in an effort to achieve a soothing emotional effect.

She felt helpless and out of control. It happened again despite the promises she made to herself.

Rebecca knew she was sick and wanted the disorder to go away, but was afraid to let her bulimia go.

Eating disorders are never about food and weight — there are always underlying issues.

Rebecca started limiting herself to one meal a day when her family moved away. One day she ate a little more than her usual bagel and bowl of cereal. So to compensate for the extra bagel, she starved herself the next day. She liked the way her stomach looked, so she thought her life was falling in to place.

But in reality, Rebecca was isolating herself from her family and friends.

Rebecca continued to starve herself throughout the week, and would binge on the weekends. Eventually she developed bulimia, and was bingeing and purging five times a day.

The disorder allowed Rebecca not to feel. In the process she had isolated people who cared about her. I was one of them, and it was painful watching Rebecca deteriorate.

The last time she went to the dentist she had eight cavities. Her face was always swollen because of the purging. Her nails were brittle, nearly half of her hair had fallen out and her throat was always sore.

But her eating disorder had become a survival mechanism to deal with depression and despair.

I've heard people talk about Rebecca's disorder.

"It's disgusting. What's the big deal, when you're full, you stop eating. She doesn't need to lose weight anyway."

IT'S NOT ABOUT FOOD.
Rebecca was scared to feel pain. She believed she missed her childhood.

Bulimics turn to food to cope, like the alcoholic turns to beer and liquor, like the drug addict turns to cocaine.

Eating disorders are not scarce. They're dangerously common. Unlike alcohol or drugs, food cannot be avoided by the addict.

Our cultural obsession with food and weight has blurred and in many cases erased the line between eating and having an eating disorder.

For Rebecca, food became her central life preoccupation, ultimately draining her energy and attention away from living a healthy life.

Rebecca's recovery came when she started living for herself.

concerned that their water sources are endangered by chemicals accidentally released into the environment, Robillard added.

"Because there's so much information on water contamination,

people operate out of fear," said Kelli Martin, senior research technologist in agricultural engineering.

The Food and Drug Administration has primary responsibility for ensuring the safety of bottled water.

"The FDA's monitoring system is pretty reliable," Robillard said. "They're always sampling bottled waters looking for contaminants."

But both Martin and Robillard agreed that bottled water is tested

less frequently and by more relaxed methods than tap water.

"When bottled waters come in from Europe, the source is never tested," Martin said. "It spot samples an individual bottle."

Media's image of 'ideal body' may promote eating disorders

By BETH HARMEN
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In the media almost everyone is portrayed as having the ideal body — thin and beautiful.

"Everywhere you look you'll find an attractive woman," said Melissa Martilotta, director of the University's Nutrition Clinic, Ritenour Health Center. "Even the weatherwomen are attractive. None of them are fat or ugly."

But as many as 50 percent of college women and 5 percent of college men suffer from an eating disorder in attempt to reach the ideal weight.

Women are pushed to achieve a perfect body more than men, Martilotta said.

Our culture makes statements about women and weight, said Jill Morgan, psychologist at the Center for Counseling and Psychological Services at Ritenour Health Center.

"It is a culture that tells women they can be successful but they better be thin," she said. "If you pick up any magazine, it says you won't ever be accepted in a relationship if you're not thin."

"The media creates this idea of a female that is basically anorexic," Martilotta said, adding that she would ban *Cosmopolitan* and said she refuses to have a copy in her house.

Our culture also justifies the symptoms of an eating disorder, Morgan said.

"There is a cultural ideal that a woman is a piece of shit if she weighs more than 100 pounds."

An eating disorder is defined as a disturbance in eating behavior that jeopardizes a person's physical or psychological health.

The common eating disorders are anorexia nervosa and bulimia.

Bulimia is characterized by binge-eating, commonly counteracted by a variety of weight control

methods including self-induced vomiting, diuretic and laxative abuse and rigorous exercise.

Anorexia nervosa is described as self-induced starvation. The weight loss is achieved through a variety of methods, most commonly severe calorie restriction and fasting.

Eating disorders are less common among men because overeating for them is accepted if not encouraged, said Martilotta.

"It is more acceptable for a man to sit down with two platefulls of food," Martilotta said. "If that was a woman, it would be disgusting."

Martilotta said she is being bombarded with eating disorders in the University's clinic.

"After seeing someone with an eating disorder, I'm mentally and physically drained," she said, adding that emotional pain — not food — is the issue.

Society places no premium on feelings or emotions but emphasizes figure, stylishness and social sophistication, Martilotta added.

"Eating disorders are not about weight, eating or culture," Morgan said.

"Eating disorders are symptoms of other struggles — not feeling OK about yourself," Morgan said. "They're not this disgusting thing that people do with weight."

The insecurities stem from childhood and lack of family approval, Morgan added.

"Women who develop eating disorders have hard shit in their backgrounds," she said. "The message along the path is 'You're not OK.'"

"Focusing on food and eating is not as painful as focusing on what's sitting underneath it," Morgan said.

Often women with eating disorders don't know that part of recovery is realizing that purging or restricting has helped her to survive, Morgan said.

'Fake fats' misused by consumers, ads

Eating properly important

By BETH HARMEN
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Although "fake fats" allow people to consume cholesterol-free and fat-free desserts, these substitutes are ripe for misuse.

"When we introduce products that are fat-free, we're not teaching people to eat correctly and in moderation," said Joyce Gilbert, assistant professor of nutrition.

Eating large amounts of products containing fat substitutes defeats the purpose of them, she added.

"Before (fake fats), if you were an ice cream fanatic and had it every night, you would cut your fat intake during dinner," Gilbert said. "Now, with Simplese, people are over-compensating" by eating a full meal in addition to the guilt-free desert.

Simplese, a protein-based fat substitute that acts and tastes like fat, is found in the frozen dessert Simple Pleasures, Gilbert said.

NutraSweet's Simplese, approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1989, allows a product to be lower in calories, fat-free and cholesterol-free, said Arun Kilara, professor of food science.

For the maximum benefit "people who consume Simplese must make up for caloric differences by eating other foods not containing fat," Kilara said.

Simplese, made from egg or milk proteins, provides only 1.3 calories per gram compared to the 9 calories per gram fat provides.

"Simplese can only be used in cold products" such as ice cream, butter, cheese spreads and mayonnaise, said Elaine McDonnell, a nutritionist at the University's Nutrition Center, 417 E. Calder Way.

If heated the substitute coagulates like the white of an egg, Patel said.

The fat substitute olestra can be used in fried or baked products and is awaiting approval from the FDA.

A sucrose polyester, olestra is a compound that tastes and acts like fat, but passes through the body undigested.

"The FDA is examining all of evidence dealing with toxicology and safety, and will not be approving it quickly," Kilara said.

Proctor and Gamble first petitioned the FDA for olestra's approval as an additive in May 1987, said McDonnell.

Caloric-free olestra can be used in shortening and cooking oils to replace some fats, she added.

Gilbert said she fears that many people will gorge themselves on foods that were once fatty and then eat less fruit, vegetables and whole grains — foods that provide nutrients and fiber not found in ice cream and cake.

Dying to be Thin?

The following questionnaire will give you an indication of whether or not you are living a lifestyle that indicates anorexic and/or bulimic tendencies. Answer the following questions honestly and circle your answer. Key on facing page.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. I have eating habits that are different from those of my family and friends. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 2. I find myself panicking if I cannot exercise as I planned for fear of gaining weight. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 3. My friends tell me I am thin but I don't believe them because I feel fat. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 4. (Females only) My menstrual period has ceased or become irregular due to no known medical reasons. <i>1) True 2) False</i> 5. I have become obsessed with food to the point that I cannot go through a day without worrying about what I will or will not eat. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. I have lost more than 25 percent of the normal weight for my height (eg. 30 lbs. from 120 lbs.). <i>1) True 2) False</i> 7. I would panic if I got on the scale tomorrow and found out I had gained two pounds. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 8. I find that I prefer to eat alone or when I am sure no one will see me, thus am making excuses so I can eat less and less with friends and family. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 9. I find myself going on uncontrollable eating binges during which I consume large amounts of food to the point that I feel sick and make myself vomit. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. I use laxatives as a means of weight control. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 11. I find myself playing games with food such as cutting it up into tiny pieces, hiding food so people will think I ate it, chewing it and spitting it out without swallowing. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 12. People around me have become very interested in what I eat and I find myself getting angry at them for pushing food on me. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 13. I have felt more depressed and irritable recently than I used to and/or have been spending increasing amounts of time alone. <i>1) True 2) False</i> 14. I keep a lot of my fears about food and eating to myself because I am afraid no one would understand. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 15. I enjoy making gourmet, high-calorie meals or treats for others as long as I don't have to eat any myself. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 16. The most powerful fear in my life is the fear of gaining weight or becoming fat. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 17. I find myself totally absorbed when reading books about dieting, exercising and calorie counting to the point that I spend hours studying them. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 18. I tend to be a perfectionist and am not satisfied with myself unless I do things perfectly. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 19. I go through long periods of time without eating anything (fasting) as a means of weight control. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i> 20. It is important to me to try to be thinner than all of my friends. <i>1) Often 2) Sometimes 3) Rarely 4) Never</i>

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