

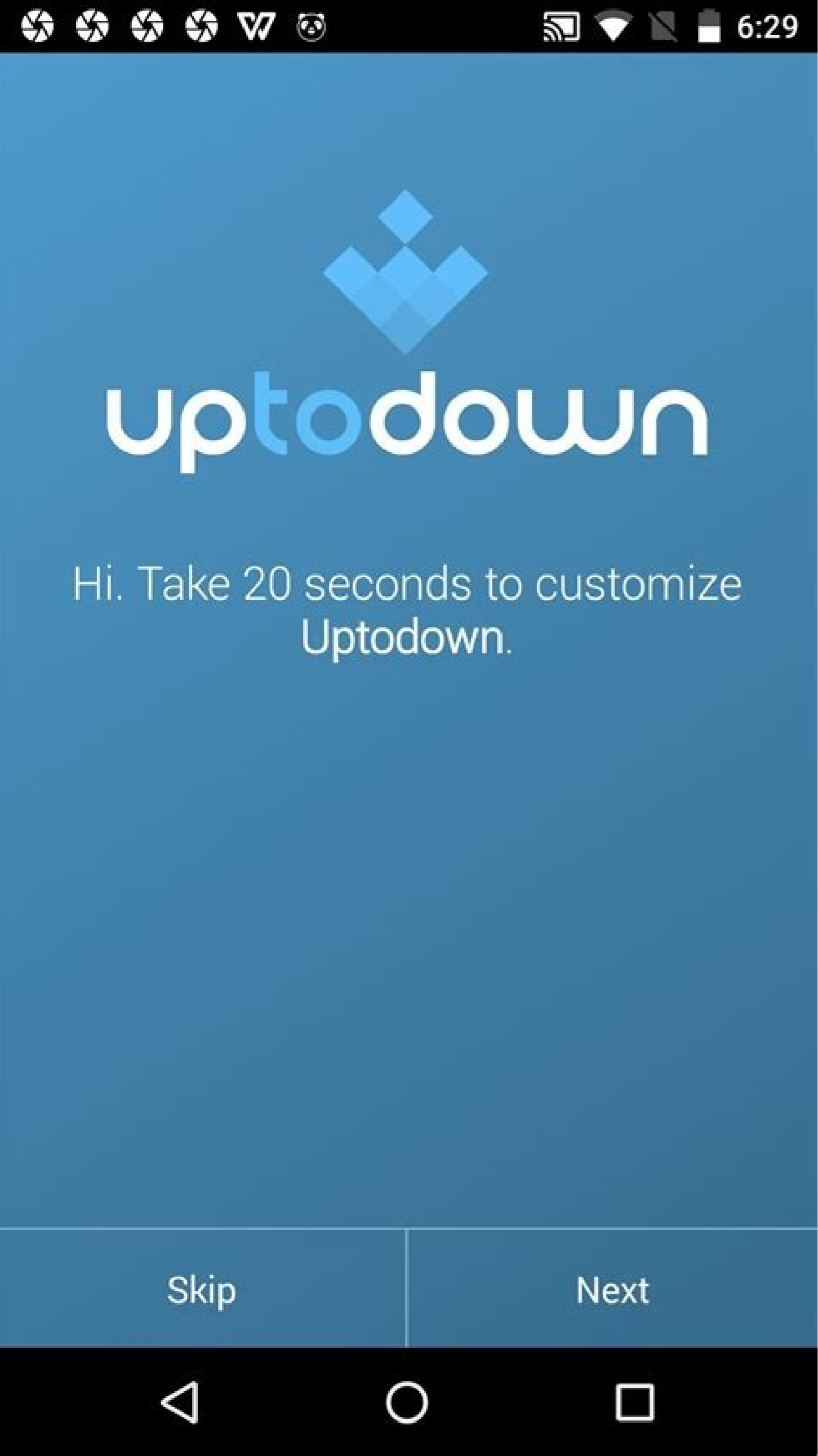
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Water filters can make the simple and important task of staying hydrated safer. Water from the tap may be a convenient way to get your recommended eight glasses a day, but it can contain contaminants such as heavy metals like lead, cadmium, mercury, and arsenic, small bits of plastic known as microplastics, or chemicals that impact taste and smell such as chlorine. The best water filters can remove these contaminants, but they aren't a one-size-fits-all solution. In order to choose a water filter that's right for you, you first need to know what is in your water. According to Jamie Gershel, MS, RD, registered dietitian of Jamie Gershel Nutrition, if you have access to public drinking water, there are regulations in place that ensure it is clean and safe to drink. Start by looking at your local water utility's annual water quality report or through a home water quality test kit. Keep in mind that water filters vary not only in their filtration methods but also in ease of installation and cost. Our top recommendation is the Big Berkey Gravity Fed Water Filter, which can hold 2.25 gallons of water at a time and removes bacteria, parasites, and heavy metals. For a more localized solution, we like the Pur Plus Faucet Mount Water Filtration System because it is easy to install directly on your faucet for filtered water on a tap. While deciding on a water filter will depend on your specific needs, and which type—whether you need a faucet filter, a water bottle filter, or a whole-house filter—will work best for you. We spoke with registered dietitians and reviewed filters by types, filtration processes, contaminants removed, cost, and ease of use. Here are the best water filters available online. Amazon Also available at Berkey Home and Walmart Why We Like It: Big Berkey has a large capacity and you only need to change filters every three years. It's Worth Noting: This filter is more expensive than others and takes up room on your counter. If you're looking for an easy to use, large and long lasting water filter that can provide clean water for a group, the Big Berkey Gravity Fed Water filter may be a great option—and our top choice. This filter is first and foremost easy to use, relying on gravity rather than electricity or pumps. And the filter is transportable, so you can place it anywhere you'd like. The Big Berkey Filter uses carbon and ion exchange to remove over 200 contaminants, including bacteria, pesticides, and heavy metals. It is also meant to last: it is made from stainless steel rather than plastic, and it has a long lasting filter. The filter only needs replacing after 3,000 gallons, or around three years (and since this model comes with two filters, you won't need to replace anything for up to six years). Plus, it has a large capacity, holding 2.25 gallons at a time, making it a great option if you have a family or live with other people. While this filter is an investment, we think it's worth it in the long run. Unlike most filters that need frequent replacing, the sturdy and heavy duty Big Berkey is a low-maintenance filter you can trust. Product Details: Filter Replacement Frequency: 3,000 Gallons or around 3 years Annual Filter Replacement Cost: \$166 every 6 years Capacity: 2.25 Gallons Dishwasher Safe: N/A Additional Maintenance Required: None Amazon Also available at Frizzlife and Walmart Why We Like It: As an under-sink filter, it won't take up precious counter space or be an eyesore on your sink faucet. It's Worth Noting: The inner filter should be replaced every three to six months. Under-sink water filters make it easy to drink filtered water straight out of the tap so you can use it for drinking, cooking, and cleaning dishes. One of the benefits of this particular filter is that it is easy to use and install—you can do it on your own without a plumber. Frizzlife Under Sink Water Filter System is third party certified by NSF/ANSI 53 & 42, an organization that develops health standards for products. These certifications ensure a product reduces a particular set of contaminants from drinking water, both in terms of chemicals that can alter taste or odor as well as contaminants that can cause health issues. Frizzlife states that they remove 99.99% of all contaminants including chlorine, lead, and heavy metals, while leaving essential minerals. Leaving in these minerals can help ensure that your water still tastes pleasant. What sets this undersink filter apart from others, and a big reason we recommend it: the Frizzlife filter is also easy to replace. The filter has a built-in shut off valve, so you don't need to shut off the water supply when replacing the filter cartridge. Rather than replacing the entire plastic housing, you only have to replace the inside cartridge, making this an eco friendly option. Product Details: Filter Replacement Frequency: 3 to 6 months Annual Filter Replacement Cost: \$40-80 Capacity: 2 Gallons Per Minute @ 60 psi - fills 330 ml cup in 3 seconds Dishwasher Safe: N/A Additional Maintenance Required: Requires installation Amazon Also available at Home Depot, Target and Walmart Why We Like It: This filter easily attaches to your faucet and will alert you when you need to change the filter so you don't need your own calendar reminder. It's Worth Noting: While this filter works with many sinks, it will not work with popular pull down or handheld faucets. Using a faucet mount is an easy way to filter water directly from the tap. The Pur Plus Faucet Mount uses a filtration method called ion exchange along with activated carbon. Activated carbon helps remove chemicals through adsorption, a process in which pollutants are attracted to the carbon. Ion exchange uses a resin to replace harmful ions, or impurities, with less harmful ones. This model is certified to reduce impurities such as lead and mercury, along with chemicals like chlorine that can give your water an unpleasant taste. Another plus for this inexpensive faucet mount is how simple it is to install and use. You can attach the filter to your faucet on your own, without tools or a plumber. The filter has an on/off switch so you can decide when to turn on the filter—in case you'd like to only use it for drinking. It also has a change light that alerts you when your filter needs replacement, which occurs around every three months. Product Details: Filter Replacement Frequency: Up to 3 months Annual Filter Replacement Cost: \$50 Capacity: 100 Gallons Dishwasher Safe: N/A Additional Maintenance Required: None Amazon Also available at Walmart and Home Depot Why We Like It: This filter removes major contaminants and sediment, providing you with clean water and protecting your appliances. It's Worth Noting: Whole house filtration systems are expensive and you may need a professional for installation. Whole house water filters can be helpful if you have hard water or want to remove large sediment or dirt that may be in your water. If you're only interested in filtering water for drinking, you may be able to stick with an under the sink filter or a faucet attachment. However, if you use well water, your water has a strong smell, or you would like cleaner and better smelling water for your entire house, then a whole house filtration system like this one from Express Water is your best bet. According to Elizabeth Barnes, MS, RD, LDN, a North Carolina based non-diet dietitian of Weight Neutral Wellness, whole house systems not only provide you with clean water, they can also extend the life of pipes and appliances such as your dishwasher and laundry machine. This Express Water whole house filter removes heavy metals, chlorine, rust, pesticides, dirt, sand, lead, and other impurities. Some whole house filtration systems can impact water pressure. This filter, however, is designed to have a high flow rate, providing up to 0.25 gallons of water per second. While whole house filtration is a more expensive option, the filter only needs replacing every 6 to 12 months. If you don't need a whole house filtration system, we think one of the other options on our list will be a better fit. Product Details: Filter Replacement Frequency: 6 to 12 months Annual Filter Replacement Cost: \$100-\$200 Capacity: 100,000 Gallons Dishwasher Safe: N/A Additional Maintenance Required: May need plumber for installation Amazon Also available at Target and Walmart Why We Like It: This NSF certified pitcher removes contaminants, can fit in your fridge, and is dishwasher safe. It's Worth Noting: The filter needs to be replaced every two months—more frequent than any other product on this list. If you're looking for an easy way to filter your water without the hassle of installing a filtration system, a pitcher might be a great option. We like that this one from Pur is an NSF certified filter, so we can be sure that it is a trustworthy product that removes the contaminants it says it does. This filter is, above all else, convenient and easy to use. It has a stay-tight lid to help prevent spills, plus you can pour while the water is still filtering. The filter is also dishwasher safe—this is an important feature, since bacteria can easily grow inside water filters. The Pur filter holds 11 cups and can fit inside your fridge door. Changing the filter is also fairly easy, with an electronic filter replacement indicator lighting up when the filter needs to be swapped out. The filter needs to be replaced after 40 gallons, which typically takes around two months. Pitcher filters need to be changed more frequently than larger filters, such as those that go under the sink, so this can add up over time. Product Details: Filter Replacement Frequency: After 40 gallons or around every 2 months Annual Filter Replacement Cost: \$143 Capacity: 11 cups Dishwasher Safe: Yes Additional Maintenance Required: Should be washed in dishwasher Amazon Also available at Grayl and Walmart Why We Like It: This water bottle is the perfect companion for hiking and camping, removing viruses, bacteria, chemicals, particles, flavors, and odors. It's Worth Noting: This bottle is more expensive than other water filtering bottles, and not all parts are dishwasher safe. A water bottle that both purifies your water and that is easy to carry is a must for every camping, hiking, or traveling trip. Plus, this one from Grayl is great to have on hand for a water emergency or natural disaster. The Grayl GeoPress Water Purifier Bottle is a durable bottle that carries 24 ounces of water. It uses ion exchange and activated carbon to filter water, removing viruses, bacteria, protozoa, particles such as microplastics or sediment, and heavy metals like lead or arsenic. It is also easy to use—all you have to do is fill your bottle and press down with the filter for 8 seconds, no chemicals, long waiting times, or bulky equipment required. We really like how long the filter cartridge lasts for: it only needs to be replaced every 350 presses or approximately 65 gallons of water. While there are cheaper water bottles with built-in filters, we believe the filtering capabilities of this model from Grayl separate it from the competition. Product Details: Filter Replacement Frequency: 350 Presses/250 Liters/65 Gallons Annual Filter Replacement Cost: \$45/cartridge Capacity: 24 fl oz Dishwasher Safe: Outer (refill), inner press, and cap are top rack dishwasher safe Additional Maintenance Required: Cartridges should only be rinsed, no soap Amazon Also available at Walmart and Home Depot Why We Like It: This budget friendly filter is easy to connect to your faucet and fits compactly on your counter. It's Worth Noting: The filter may need an adapter for certain faucets and isn't as sleek looking as other options. If you'd like to purify your water without having to install a system or take up space under your sink, a countertop water filter may be a good choice. We like that the iSpring CK1C Countertop Drinking Water Filtration System fits compactly on your kitchen counter and is easy to install on your own without any drilling. Some counter top filters require manual refilling, but this connects directly to your faucet and is very straightforward to use. This counter top filter uses coconut shell carbon block to filter chlorine, odors, and sediment while leaving in essential minerals. This filter has also been tested by the Water Quality Association to meet NSF/ANSI standards. In addition to these positives, we like this filter's affordable price point. The filter does, however, need replacing every 6 months. Product Details: Filter Replacement Frequency: 6 months Annual Filter Replacement Cost: \$64 Capacity: 5 x 5 x 12 inches (countertop unit dimensions) Dishwasher Safe: N/A Additional Maintenance Required: None Amazon Also available at Lowe's and Home Depot Why We Like It: This reverse osmosis filter includes a faucet and can remove nearly all contaminants, including PFAS ("forever chemicals"). It's Worth Noting: This filter is a more expensive choice and removes fluoride from water, which is typically added to tap water protect your teeth. Activated carbon filters organic compounds, chlorine, and most parasites from water, but according to Kylie Ivanir, MS, RD, registered dietitian of Within Nutrition, you need a reverse osmosis system if you need to filter for nitrates, sulfates, arsenic, and heavy metals. This specialized type of filtration involves several filtration stages that remove most contaminants—and this model from APEC is our top choice if you require such a filter. Barnes adds that a lot of mention has been made of PFAS in the news. "If removing PFAS, otherwise known as 'forever chemicals,' is a main concern for you and your family, a reverse osmosis filter is a great option. Reverse osmosis filters are effective at removing PFAS due to their high-pressure membranes." One drawback to reverse osmosis filters in general, however, is that they also remove fluoride, which is added to many water systems to protect teeth. This APEC Water Systems filter can be installed under your sink for clean water straight from the tap. This filter removes chlorine, taste, odor, and toxic heavy metals. APEC also uses metal construction to prevent kinks and leaks, a common issue with other filters. In addition to the heavy filtering capabilities, this filter is a heavier lift to set up by yourself, but the brand does have a series of installation videos (you may still want professional help). This is a pricier option, but given the amount of contaminants the APEC water filtering system removes, we think it's worth it. Product Details: Filter Replacement Frequency: 6 to 12 months Annual Filter Replacement Cost: \$73 Capacity: 5 Gallons/Day Dishwasher Safe: N/A Additional Maintenance Required: Requires installation To determine the best water filters, we spoke with several registered dietitians about the differences between the types of water filters and the types of contaminants they filter. We prioritized filters that have been third-party certified but didn't use those criteria as automatic grounds for dismissal from our list. In reviewing the various water filters on the market, we took into consideration filtration methods, contaminants removed, ease of installation, and lifetime costs and maintenance. We offered a range of filter types so you can find one that best meets your needs—and your budget. When shopping for water filters, it is important to first know what contaminants are in your water. Based on this information, you will be better equipped to decide which treatment solution addresses your concerns. It is important to note that not all filters or filtration methods remove all contaminants. (Source the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)) Activated carbon filters: These filters use activated carbon to soak up impurities that produce unpleasant tastes or odors. This can include organic matter, volatile organic compounds, chlorine, and others per the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Ion exchange filters: Water is passed through synthetic resin. Harmless charged ions on the surface of the resin are exchanged with harmful charged contaminants in the water. This can be useful for removing arsenic, chromium, cyanide, and other impurities. Reverse osmosis filters: This process forces water at high pressure through semipermeable filters, removing a larger range of contaminants such as heavy metals, bacteria, and viruses. Mechanical filters: Water is passed through a mesh filter that traps particles. These types of filters remove larger materials such as sand, silt, and organic matter. UV filters: Ultraviolet light can be used to remove microbial contamination in water, reducing bacteria, protozoa, and viruses present. UV light is not, however, a filter, but rather a method of disinfection. It does not remove contaminants such as heavy metals, chlorine, or chemicals. UV filtration will not improve the taste or smell of your water. Commonly filtered contaminants: Different filters are able to filter varying contaminants. The common contaminants include those that can impact taste and smell, such as chlorine. Chlorine is often added to water as a disinfectant to kill microbial organisms, but it can result in an unpleasant taste. Other contaminants water filters may remove include microplastic particles, fluoride, larger particles like sediment or sand, or harmful toxic heavy metals such as lead, mercury, cadmium, and arsenic. The contaminants a filter is able to remove will vary, so be sure to check for a list of contaminants your filter removes or reduces. Water filter installation will vary based on the type of filter. Certain filters such as pitchers, countertops, water bottles, certain faucet attachments, and under-sink filters can be installed on your own. For whole house filters, you will likely need to hire a professional. Water filters need to be replaced every so often to ensure they continue to function properly. Smaller filters such as pitchers, faucet attachments, or countertop filters often have to be replaced every 2 to 3 months. While this is usually an easy process, it can add to overall costs over time. Larger filtration systems, such as whole house filters, often require less frequent replacing. What is the healthiest way to filter water? The healthiest way to filter water will depend on the contaminants in your water, which is why we recommend testing your water first if possible. Filters that use activated carbon remove impurities like chlorine, which can improve the taste and smell of your water. Other processes such as reverse osmosis are suitable for more in depth filtering, because this process removes most chemical contaminants such as bacteria as well as heavy metals like lead, arsenic, and cadmium. Do I need to filter my tap water? Deciding whether or not to filter your tap water depends on what contaminants are in your water, and whether or not you think it has an unpleasant taste or smell. Barnes tells us that most tap water is safe: "As a dietitian, I assure clients that most of our tap water from a public source is safe to drink. Unsure if your water is safe? You can find out from a water testing site in your area by calling the Safe Drinking Water Hotline at 800-426-4791." Tamar Kane, MS, RD is an NYC-based Registered Dietitian and marathon runner. She is the founder of Tamar Kane Nutrition, a virtual practice that focuses on helping runners learn to fuel their running and their lives. Tamar has her master's degree in Nutrition and Exercise Physiology from Teachers College Columbia University and specializes in working with plant-based athletes. Her goal is to help people understand how to properly fuel their bodies to optimize performance and wellbeing. Thanks for your feedback!

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