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Drinking water from packaged bottles may be giving you cancer

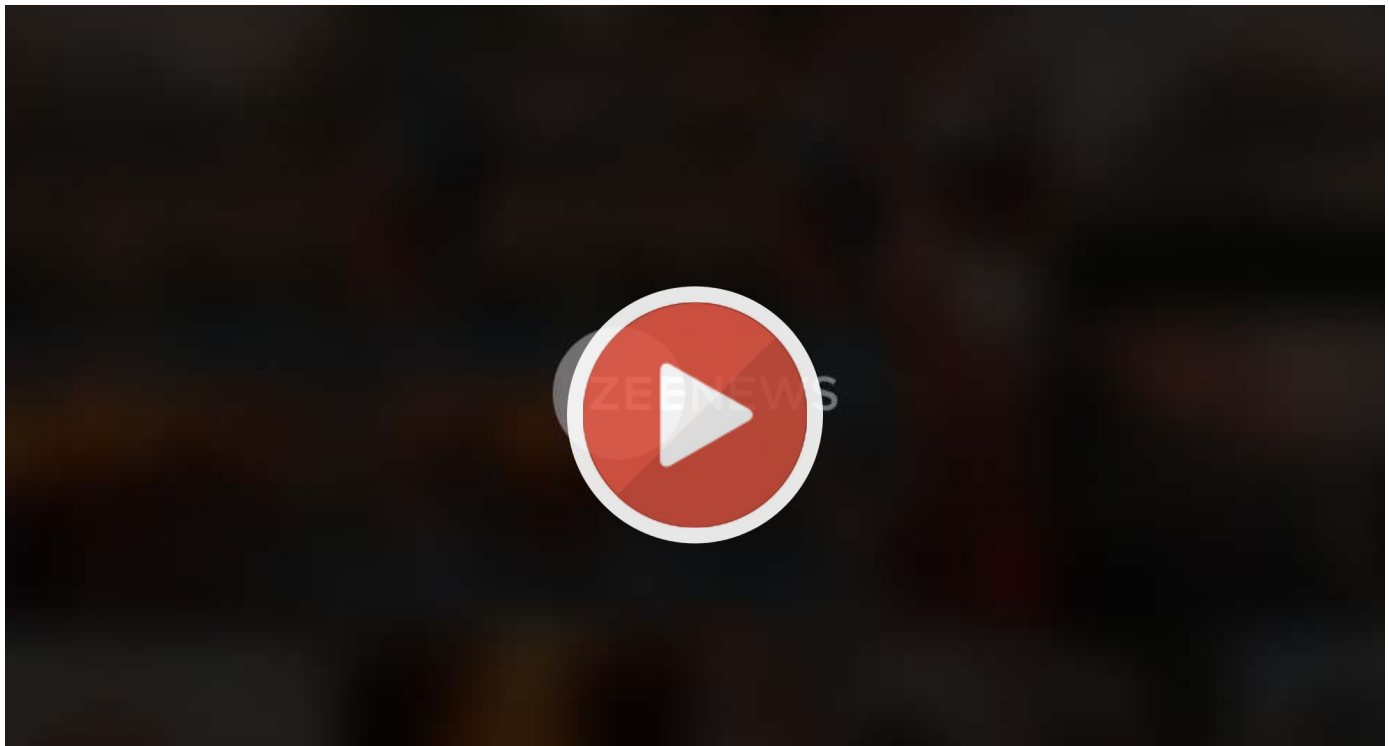
Almost every bottle has a plastic grade mentioned at the bottom which shows how safe the materials used to make the bottle are. Either consumers don't check or don't know what each sign means.

ZEE By Zee Media Bureau | Last Updated: Nov 28, 2017, 11:30

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Representational image courtesy Pixabay

New Delhi: The promise of safe water in sealed packaged bottles may be not what it is made out to be. As more and more urban Indians turn to packaged drinking water, they may also be putting themselves at a greater health risk. A study by Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru has found that most of these bottles have carcinogenic elements which can prove to be deadly.

The study was conducted on water bottled by several big and common brands seen across India. The results found that plastic bottles in which water is stored, transported and eventually sold, leach chemicals that are harmful to the human body.

Temperature variations are the primary factor that causes the bottles - usually of cheap quality - to make the water rather toxic. "When you travel with a bottle of water, there is heat transfer and because of that, these bottles release dioxins and other chemicals - some of these being carcinogenic," Professor TV Ramachandra, a researcher at IISc, told Wion. "This means that in the long run, people are exposed to carcinogenic substances which means they could develop cancer."

Most medical experts agree that boiling water remains the safest option. And while that may not always be possible, there are also many who advocate transferring water to bottles made of food-grade substances.

In fact, numerous international studies agree that one must check the grade of plastic used to make bottles for liquids meant for consumption.

Most bottles have a numerical grade mentioned at the bottom and this is what they mean:

PETE 1 - Most commonly used plastic in mass-market bottled water and other liquids due to being cost-effective. Long considered safe, the plastic used can have a detrimental impact on health in the long run as it is susceptible to temperature variations and can leach carcinogenic substances.

HDPE 2 - Another commonly used variant of plastic, this particular variety is seen in the packaging of grocery bags, juice containers, shampoo and detergent bottles, etc. While mostly safe, some studies have shown the possibility of certain disruptive elements.

PVC 3 - Used in most toys and packaging of take-away food items, squeeze bottles, mouthwash containers and cooking oil, this variant of plastic is highly toxic and must be avoided. Transferring liquid contents to glass bottles is advised.

LDPE 4 - Mostly used in hot and cold beverage cups (disposable), some bottles for honey and mustard and in some food storage containers, this grade is relatively safe. However, some studies have shown that when exposed to ultraviolet rays for prolonged periods, these may leach certain disruptive elements.

PP5 - Mostly used in food containers, bottle caps, straws and medical containers, these are relatively safe and heat resistant. While these are difficult to recycle, their prolonged use may not