

# Global Survey Reveals Consumers Care About Water Quality but Lack Understanding of Water Safety and Sustainability

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World Water Day is a United Nations Observance Day celebrated every year on March 22. The event seeks to raise awareness to the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water.

This year, the focus is on the question, "What does water mean to you?" According to a new survey from global water leaders Culligan International, Quench, Zip Water, and ZeroWater, the answer is different for everyone, but there is one common theme: a growing lack of trust in drinking water and an opportunity to better educate the public about what they can do about it.

"The survey clearly shows that North American consumers care about their water and undoubtedly are interested in promoting sustainability," said Culligan International President & CEO Scott Clawson. "Yet the study also shows that more work must be done to help consumers gain a deeper understanding about how to ensure their water is clean and safe, and how they can do more to protect the environment."

The survey examined respondents' attitudes and perspectives on water as related to health, environmental impact, and other areas. While many said they were taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint, their actions suggest they still do not realize the impact of some of their practices. Despite their interest in sustainability, for example, 67% of people in North America drink water from single-use plastic bottles away from home and 57% do so at home.

At the same time, two-thirds of respondents are worried about contamination levels when drinking water away from home while a similar percentage, 59%, are also worried about their drinking water at home. Perhaps because of this, more than 50 billion plastic bottles are purchased every year in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> This high usage may relate to a lack of understanding about

the waste these practices generate: Nearly half of those surveyed in North America believe plastic bottles are not bad for the environment because they can be recycled. In fact, just 29% of plastic bottles are recycled in the U.S. each year.<sup>2</sup>

Other key global findings from the survey spoke to a variety of habits and perceptions related to water:

- In all regions surveyed, people admit their current daily water consumption is 12% to 20% lower than the ideal.
- 72% of people around the world believe bottled water is safer than tap water, despite bottles often being made with potentially harmful phthalates<sup>3</sup> and its contents having twice the amount of microplastics present as compared to tap water.<sup>4</sup>
- 1 in 4 of respondents from North America do not know whether dehydration has a negative impact on their motor skills; globally, fewer than half of respondents know that drinking water actually decreases water retention<sup>5</sup>, which can cause bloating and added water weight.

“Our goal is to help drive a better understanding of the key role water plays in our lives and ensure access to clean, safe water at home, at work, and on the go for all,” said Culligan CEO Clawson. “As an industry, we all need to play a part, by conducting more ground-breaking studies, understanding consumer behavior, and ultimately encouraging environmental change through leadership, education, and our range of world-class products.”

1. [EarthDay.org](http://EarthDay.org)

2. [EPA.gov](http://EPA.gov)

3. [Water Research journal via ScienceDirect.com](http://WaterResearchJournal.via.ScienceDirect.com)

4. [Frontiers in Chemistry via ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://FrontiersinChemistry.via.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)

5. [Medical News Today](http://MedicalNewsToday)

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