

DRINKING WATER FOUNTAINS SOMETIMES GET AN UNDERSERVED REPUTATION AS SOURCES OF BACTERIA AND SPREADERS OF DISEASE.

Let's be clear...drinking tap water from public water fountains is safe!



Can I contract the flu from drinking public tap water?

According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control, tap water that has been treated by conventional disinfection processes does not pose a risk for transmission of influenza viruses. Illnesses like influenza spread when an infected person coughs and sneezes and their germs enter the nose, eyes, or throat of another person.

How about water fountains, aren't they full of bacteria from people's mouths?

Like other surfaces touched frequently by the public, water fountains should be cleaned regularly with appropriate disinfectants to eliminate bacteria. Like a grocery cart, doorknobs or ATM Bank machines, public water fountains will be touched by other humans. People should wash their hands after touching objects that come in contact with multiple users. In its 2009 flu season recommendations, Canada's Public Health Agency says that cleaning these types of surfaces will help prevent the transmission of the influenza virus. If used and cleaned properly, like all other objects touched by the public, water fountains are safe.



The water fountains where I work/go to school are old/have poor flow and I have to touch the spout to get water. This is dangerous but I don't want to drink bottled water. What can I do?

In the short term, people who work or study in buildings with poor quality drinking fountains should bring water from home in a refillable water bottle. To deal with the broader problem of old, dirty or poorly maintained fountains, you need to contact the people in charge of cleaning and fixing these fountains. Talk to the building managers, your boss, the school principle or administration and pressure them to upgrade existing water fountains. This type of un-maintained fountain does pose a certain health risk— just like a poorly maintained public bathroom – and is part of a broader pattern to de-emphasize the importance of publicly delivered tap water.