

Do You Really Need a Water Filter?

(Cantonese dialogue with English subtitles)

Woman A: Look, water filters are on sale.
You're always suspicious about the quality of tap water.
Why don't you buy one?

Woman B: Alright.
I heard there are a lot of impurities in tap water.
I would feel at ease if I have installed one at my tap.

Woman C: Are you sure those are impurities not minerals in tap water?
Are you going to buy water filter without knowing more about it first?

Woman A: But there are so many positive comments online saying it's useful.

Woman C: I'm worried installing one might have adverse effect on water quality.

Super: Ir Dr Chan Hon Fai
Chairperson of the Drinking Water Safety Advisory Committee

Dr Chan Hon Fai: If you don't install water filters properly,
it really could have adverse effect on water quality.

Actually, the drinking water supplied by the Water Supplies Department (WSD)

fully complies with the Hong Kong Drinking Water Standards (HKDWS).

Every day, the WSD randomly collects water samples from customers' taps for testing,

to ensure that the drinking water meets HKDWS.

If your building

maintains its water supply system regularly,

including cleaning the water tank every three months

It can help ensure the drinking water at your tap is safe for consumption.

So, it's indeed not necessary to install a water filter.

Woman C:

Dr. Chan

I've heard that installing a water filter without permission from the WSD could be against the law. Is that true?

Dr Chan Hon Fai:

Before you install a water filter,

you have to ensure the water filter you chose is the type that you can install it by yourself,

and without any stop valve at downstream.

If you want to install a water filter

directly connected with WSD's water mains,

prior consent from the WSD is required.

Otherwise, you could be breaking the law.

Woman B: After using a water filter for a while there's a layer of sediment on the filter cartridge surface.
Does that mean there's something wrong with the tap water?

Dr Chan Hon Fai: This is actually a common phenomenon.
Our drinking water contains natural minerals including calcium, magnesium, and iron.
These minerals aren't harmful to health.
Recently, some black sediments were found in the drinking water.
This is because, in the past, some public water mains were lined internally with bituminous coating to prevent corrosion.
Over time, the bituminous lining peels off, causing black sediments in the drinking water.
But bitumen is a natural material, and it's been rigorously tested to make sure it's harmless to health.
All you need is a strainer or water filter to remove those black sediments, the drinking water remains safe for consumption.

Woman A: So if sediment builds up on water filter cartridge surface, what should we do?

Dr Chan Hon Fai: Let me show you two experiments.
 This is tap water,
 there's no obvious bacterial growth.
 The other one is water from a water filter
 that hasn't been properly maintained,
 you can see there is a lot of bacteria growing.
 So based on these results,
 if you have installed a water filter,
 you need to follow the manufacturer's instructions
 to replace and maintain the water filter regularly.
 Otherwise, it could become a breeding ground for
 bacteria.

Woman A: I see.

Women A, B, and C: Thank you, Dr. Chan.

Super:

Water Supplies Department logo
