

VITAMIN WATERS EXPOSED

We lab-tested several enhanced waters to see if they contained the compounds they claimed — and if they had any extra substances they shouldn't.

NOTHING IS BETTER THAN FRUITS AND VEGGIES TO GAIN the nutrients your body needs. But vitamin-enhanced waters seem like a decent alternative: hydration and critical vitamins, such as B, C, and E, in one ready-to-drink package. The idea has certainly won over consumers: In the past year bottled waters containing vitamins or minerals had sales close to \$1 billion.

And yet, on closer examination, many of these drinks are high in calories, and they rarely provide more than 10 percent of your recommended daily serving of vitamins. To find out what's really in some popular brands, we tapped Denver-based laboratory ChromaDex. The results* can help you determine what to grab for your specific nutritional needs. —JAMIE BECKMAN

photograph by
Jeff Harris



FRUIT_{2.0} ESSENTIALS
(PEACH MANGO)
Tested higher than the label in: B1, B2
Tested low in: B5, E
Half the B5 it claims; no E
Best for: Aiding digestion. B1 produces hydrochloric acid, which helps break down food.
Calories per bottle: 0
Evaporation test: According to the company, the total dissolved solids (TDS) should be 2 1/2 grams, but the test found 7. "What is the other stuff?" asks tester and ChromaDex CEO Frank Jaksch. It could be anything from flavoring to dirt.
Verdict: Zero calories is good, but the low levels of nutrients make it only slightly better than tap water.

SPECIAL K_{2.0} PROTEIN WATER (MIXED BERRY)
Tested higher than the label in: B1, B2, B6
Tested low in: B3
No B3; label claims 20% RDA
Best for: Warding off viruses. B6 helps produce antibodies.
Calories per bottle: 50
Evaporation test: Tested at 40

grams of solids; label claims below 30.
Verdict: More vitamins than advertised, but an extra 10 grams of unidentified solids.

SNAPPLE ANTIOXIDANT WATER (AGAVE MELON)
Tested higher than the label in: B1, E
Tested low in: Nothing
Best for: Heart health. E may prevent LDL ("bad") cholesterol from narrowing arteries.
Calories per bottle: 140
Evaporation test: Hits claim

Verdict: The label checks out, but overall, few vitamins.

VITAMINWATER 10 (ESSENTIAL)
Tested higher than the label in: B1, B2, B5, B6, C, E
Tested low in: B3
Little B3; label claims 10% RDA
Best for: Shortening a cold. C might get you better faster.
Calories per bottle: 25
Evaporation test: Hits claim
Verdict: Best overall. Contains more vitamins than the others, and the TDS matches the claim.

SOBE LIFEWATER (BLACK AND BLUE BERRY)
Tested higher than the label in: B1, B2, B5, B6, C, E
Tested low in: B3
3% RDA of B3; label claims 10%
Best for: Preventing headaches. New research shows that B2 may prevent migraines.
Calories per bottle: 0
Evaporation test: 3 grams *under* what the label claims
Verdict: Failed B3 tests but tested high in six vitamins, making it a clear second place.

PROPEL (BLUEBERRY POMEGRANATE)
Tested higher than the label in: B1, B5, B6, C
Tested low in: B3, E
18% RDA of B3, but label claims 25%; half the E it claims
Best for: Staying alert. A B1 deficiency can cause fatigue.
Calories per bottle: 20
Evaporation test: Hits claim
Verdict: Decent, but contains high-fructose corn syrup, a hard-to-digest processed sugar.

*TEST RESULTS COULD VARY AS MUCH AS 10 PERCENT.