

MOUNTAIN PURE “PURIFIED” DRINKING WATER RECALLED FOR MOLD

As Mark Bittman said when he tweeted this press release, “If bottled water is getting recalled we’re all in a lot of trouble.”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 4, 2011
– Officials at the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) announced today that test results on a sample taken from certain lots of Mountain Pure bottled drinking water show the presence of biological contamination.

The company has announced a voluntary recall of lots marked with a four-digit time code. The time code is written in military time, and the affected time period is from 2200 through 0400. This is etched into the plastic bottle. Also included is an expiration date code that says either Best By 2-27-2013 MPWA or Best By 2-28-2013 MPWA. These are bottles of purified drinking water in the 16.9 fl. oz. (506 ml.) size. ADH is recommending that anyone who might have purchased or received any of this bottled water dispose of it or return it to the point of purchase.

More testing is needed to identify the specific type of mold and its origin, and that is expected to take several more days. ADH has recommended to the company that they recall the entire lot where this sample originated, and the recall process is underway.

According to William L. Mason, MD, MPH, branch chief for the Preparedness and Emergency Response branch at ADH, it is unlikely that a healthy person would

become ill from drinking this water. "People with a weakened immune system might be at higher risk," Mason said. "Anyone who thinks they may have become ill after drinking this water should consult a physician."

The affected water was found in a shipment of bottled water ordered by the city of Clinton for use during disaster response efforts that are on-going there. In some communities, including Clinton, public drinking water systems are under precautionary boil orders to help reduce the possibility of diarrheal illness. Residents are urged to boil drinking water for one minute prior to consuming it or to drink bottled water.

"We want to stress that the bottled water recall applies only to the specific lots of Mountain Pure water that are on the recall," Mason said. "We are still saying that bottled water and water that you have purified by boiling is the safest way to provide drinking water in those communities with disrupted water supplies."

This water was distributed because the water treatment plant in Clinton, AR, failed after heavy rains. According to the "Pure Mountain" people, the mold was introduced into the bottles as dust fell into the bottles during "purification."

He said dust particles got into some water bottles during the capping of filled water bottles as part of the final process known as ozonation, where ozone is used to remove iron, manganese, taste, odors and sulfur without adding chemicals.

The particles may not show up for several days, depending on the temperature at which the bottled water

█ is stored, according to Stacks.

It's bad enough that we can't produce eggs or peanut butter without contamination. But it seems somehow symbolic that we can't manage to bottle water without introducing some kind of contamination.