



# Drinking Water Fact Kit

## Importance of Changing Water Filters

NSF International is an independent, not-for-profit public health organization that writes public health standards for food, water and consumer products. NSF also tests and certifies products to make sure they meet these standards. NSF has a 65-year history of protecting public health, safety and environment worldwide and is a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Food and Water Safety and Indoor Environment. NSF developed the American national public health standards for materials and products coming into contact with drinking water and all chemicals used to treat drinking water. NSF has also developed seven standards for drinking water treatment products, such as filters, faucet mounts and under sink varieties.

Water filtration devices come in many shapes and sizes. But no matter where the filtration system installs, there is a good chance that it uses a filter media that will need to be replaced on a regular basis.

### Why do filters need to be changed?

Many filtration systems today use carbon, charcoal, or a blend of filter medias to help reduce impurities. These systems generally reduce contaminants in one of two ways.

First, some contaminants are filtered mechanically, meaning they are physically large enough to be trapped in the pores of the filter. Other contaminants adhere to the surface of the filter media. Eventually, the surface area of the filter media becomes filled and no more contaminants can be adsorbed. Or, the pores of the filter become so clogged with debris that water is unable to move through the filter effectively.

While the latter is easy to spot, since the flow rate of the water being produced by the system slows dramatically, it's not as easy to tell when the surface area of the filter media has become full and needs to be changed.

### How often should filters be changed?

Home filtration systems usually have established "service cycles." The service cycle may be for a specific number of gallons or an estimate of the number of months that a cartridge will last in the average home. In order to ensure the filter continues to reduce contaminants, the filter should be changed when the end of the service cycle is reached.

### Choose the right replacement cartridge

Filter cartridges are not necessarily universal. While a non-certified cartridge may look similar in size and even appear to fit inside the housing of a water treatment system, even the smallest size difference could allow water to go around the cartridge rather than through it.

In addition, non-certified filter cartridges may not be of the same quality as the manufacturer's suggested replacement, which could result in the introduction of impurities from materials that were never tested for material safety in drinking water applications.



*Failing to change the filter could result in water that is no longer being adequately filtered and treated.*

To find NSF certified products, visit [www.nsf.org/certified/consumer/listings\\_main.asp](http://www.nsf.org/certified/consumer/listings_main.asp).