



How Effective are Refrigerator Water Filters?



Refrigerators with built-in water filters seem like a great deal—you need a refrigerator anyway, so why not purchase one that filters your water? While certainly better than nothing, refrigerator filters have significant limitations when compared to dedicated whole house or countertop filtration systems.

Size Matters

Most built-in refrigerator filters use activated carbon as filtration medium.

Two considerations determine how effectively activated charcoal filters reduce contaminants: size, and how long the water remains in contact with the filter medium. In small filtration systems, such as built-in refrigerator filters, the amount of filtration media is by necessity limited.

What Gets Filtered? What do Refrigerator Water Filters Remove?

Activated charcoal removes some of the chlorine, volatile organic chemicals, radon, benzene, and many other man-made chemicals, as well as bad tastes and odors. Within the limits of their small size, built-in refrigerator filters do a fair job of removing these threats, although less effectively than larger systems. Activated charcoal alone, however, isn't enough to remove all waterborne contaminants.

Carbon filters offer little to no protection against a wide range of inorganic contaminants and heavy metals, including threats such as:

- Arsenic
- Barium
- Beryllium
- Cadmium
- Chromium
- Copper
- Minerals
- Lead
- Fluoride
- Mercury
- Nickel
- Selenium
- Sulfates
- Thallium

Convenience Issues

At first glance, a built-in refrigerator system may seem convenient, but remember, it only provides filtered water in one location—your kitchen. A whole house filter offers cleaner, safer water from any tap in the house, whether you're cooking, cleaning dishes, bathing, or washing clothes.

Limited Filter Lifespans = More Expense

Built-in refrigerator filter systems have one last issue to consider: filter replacement costs. They eventually clog up with contaminants and need replacing usually about every 3 months.

If that isn't enough. Even if you have a "good quality" filter in other locations in your home, they still might not be making the grade.

Refer to our other articles on the "Water Contaminants Lists" both regulated and unregulated for further insight.

Schedule your water consultation with Dr Lori Puskar for further enlightenment.