

# Drugs in the Water: What Can We Do? Essay

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### Drugs in the Water: What Can We Do?

Water is one substance vital to human life and yet so easily overlooked in importance. Many third world countries may have contaminated water sources, but even the wealthy countries face the question of how to keep the water clean. Waterborne pathogens are a major concern for undeveloped countries, but a new threat predominately affecting developed countries is the emerging chemical contaminants in the [water](#). Shane Snyder is a professor of chemical and environmental engineering at the University of Arizona. According to a chapter he wrote in the book, *Contaminants of Emerging Concern in the Environment: Ecological and Human Health Considerations*, for over 40 years pharmaceuticals have been detected in the United States' water; however, they have been overlooked until the 1990s when their impact on fish was discovered (Snyder). 700 new chemicals are introduced yearly in the United States (Gleick) and make it into the water supply where they are not completely filtered out. Chemicals used in everything from personal care products to pesticides and pharmaceuticals pose a threat to aquatic and surrounding life. These chemicals also play a role in developing new pathogens. Endocrine disruptors are one group of concerning chemicals. They mimic or block hormones and hinder natural hormone processes. The Biennial Report on Freshwater Resources links endocrine disruptors to the thinning of eggshells in birds, the feminization

of male fish near treatment plants, and the feminization of amphibians (Gleick). Birds with weakening eggshells are less likely to produce successful offspring because the shell can no longer offer the unhatched chick the same level of protection because thinner shells a...

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...surface water.

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