Lime juice makes drinking water safer, researchers find

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Researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Health and the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine found that adding lime juice to water that is treated with a solar disinfection method removed detectable levels of harmful bacteria such as E. coli significantly faster than solar disinfection alone. The results are featured in the April 2012 issue of American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene.

"For many countries, access to clean drinking water is still a major concern. Previous studies estimate that globally, half of all hospital beds are occupied by people suffering from a water-related illness," said Kellogg Schwab, PhD, MS, senior author of the study, director of the Johns Hopkins University Global Water Program and a professor with the Bloomberg School's Department of Environmental Health Sciences. "The preliminary results of this study show solar disinfection of water combined with citrus could be effective at greatly reducing E. coli levels in just 30 minutes, a treatment time on par with boilingÂ and other household water treatment methods. In addition, the 30 milliliters of juice per 2 liters of water amounts to about one-half Persian lime per bottle, a quantity that will likely not be prohibitively expensive or create an unpleasant flavor."

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