

bat the *ick* factor by entrapping more and different types of pollutants. And for good reason. The number of serious contaminants in source water continues to rise, says Rick Andrews, operations manager for water-treatment product certification at National Sanitation Foundation (NSF), which sets standards and certifies compliance for water-treatment products.

The gasoline additive MTBE (methyltertiarybutylether) was unheard of a decade ago but is now being detected in groundwater in 34 states. Health effects of MTBE include headaches, dizziness, nausea and breathing problems. The chemical TCE (trichloroethylene), used in dry cleaning, is turning up more in Florida groundwater. It is a carcinogen.

Other potential threats are perchloro-

rate (used in rocket fuel), which damages the thyroid; nitrates (from agricultural fertilizers) and radon, which are carcinogens; pharmaceuticals (from improperly disposed-of medicines), which can disrupt normal bodily functions; and chromium, which can cause kidney and liver damage.

Meanwhile, EPA in January 2006 implemented standards that cut by 80



## Best Buys in Water Filters

### Best Buy Categories:

[P]=Premium selection;  
[M]=Midrange selection;  
[E]=Economy selection.  
See page 72.

Criteria for selecting Best Buys in water-filtration systems involve comparing products on the number and efficiency of contaminants removed, filter life, ease of filter replacement and extras that augment product usage or maintain filtration efficiency delivered for the price. Products also had to have their performance certified under standards set by National Sanitation Foundation (NSF), Water Quality Association (WQA) and/or Underwriters Laboratories. As the content of source water can vary greatly between different locations, consumers should check with their local water treatment agency on their area's water quality before determining which system will best

meet their household needs.

*Best Price* is a reflection of the lowest retail price available at press time and is subject to change.

### Filter Pitchers

#### [E] Crystal Quest Ultimate Pitcher

List: \$35; Best Price: \$25

This 10-cup-capacity pitcher's four-stage filter goes well beyond the chlorine-removal abilities of rival models to net a host of other contaminants, including lead, asbestos, mercury, chromium, benzene, pesticides and microorganisms. Its flip-top lid offers ease of refilling, and the handle is designed for comfortable pouring.

#### Features:

- \* Filter life: 6 mos., replacement best price \$12.50
- \* Warranty: 90-day limited

### Faucet-Mount Systems

#### [M] Brita Aquaview System

List: \$45; Best Price: \$35

The exclusive multistage filtration system extracts more contaminants than similarly priced units, taking out bad-taste and odor-causing substances, mercury and more than 100 VOCs (volatile organic compounds). You can watch the filter do its job through a built-in window. Easy to install without tools, the unit can be switched between filtered and unfiltered water. An electronic LED blinks when it's time to replace the filter.

#### Features:

- \* Filter life: 6 mos., replacement best price \$20
- \* Warranty: 1-yr. limited

#### [E] WaterPik F-2C

List: \$20; Best Price: \$17

This all-around money-saver creates bottle-quality water at only 7 cents per gallon. The carbon-block filter is NSF-certified to remove chlorine as well as bad-taste- and odor-causing substances. It's simple to attach to an existing faucet and switches between filtered and unfiltered water to extend filter life.

#### Features:

- \* Filter life: 3 mos., replacement best price \$6
- \* Warranty: 1-yr. limited

### Countertop Systems

#### [P] Quixtar eSpring Water Purifier

List: \$577; Best Price: \$577

The addition of microorganism-killing UV (ultraviolet) light makes this model, exclusive to Amway home businesses, worth the effort. UV light eradicates more than 99 percent of bacteria, viruses and cysts, and this unit's carbon-block filters also remove 140 contaminants (including lead, mercury, radon and pesticides) while leaving in beneficial minerals (calcium, magnesium and fluoride). An electronic monitor signals when it's time to replace the filter. The replacement filter cartridge and UV bulb can be installed in minutes without tools.

#### Features:

- \* Filter life: 1 yr., replacement best price \$174
- \* Warranty: 2-yr. limited

#### [M] Multi-Pure MP750SC

List: \$360; Best Price: \$340

An electrokinetic adsorption system separates this highly efficient unit from others in contaminant-removal efficiency by trapping large contaminants before they reach the carbon-block filter. The filter then removes arsenic, lead, iron, mercury, turbidity (water cloudiness), solvents, pesticides, MTBE, 56 VOCs and particles down to 0.5 microns. Easily attached to standard faucets, the system's diverter valve extends filter life by switching from filtered to nonfiltered water.

#### Features:

- \* Filter life: 1 yr., replacement best price \$50
- \* Warranty: 5-yr. limited, 25-yr. limited on the unit's housing

#### [E] Aquasana AQ-4000

List: \$120; Best Price: \$95

Remarkable for this price range, this dual-cartridge unit has a five-stage filtration system that extracts more types of contaminants, including MTBE, cysts, lead, pesticides, sub-micron particles and waterborne parasites, than competing models. A cleanable outer wrap for sediment removal extends filter life. With a \$38 conversion kit, this system can be installed under the sink. This unit's 100-day full warranty can be upgraded to a limited lifetime warranty by buying replacement filters through the manufacturer.

#### Features:

- \* Filter life: 6 mos., replacement best price \$45
- \* Warranty: 100-day full

(Best Buys continued on page 56)



Crystal Quest Ultimate Pitcher