



APRIL 2021

well

is a wellness and lifestyle
magazine centered around
the healing properties of
water and holistic health

03 health

14 beauty

19 reviews

21 events

Health



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The average person swipes or scrolls through 300 feet of mobile content a day...

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The Benefits of Sensory Deprivation Tank Therapy

Emily Dashiell, ND

Promising information about the benefits of the sensory deprivation tank is emerging from many sources, from clinical research studies to the news. The tank was originally designed in the 1950s, and it quickly became associated with the counterculture of the '60s. Then, it was studied for its health benefits and offered to consumers in the '70s, after which the tanks were outdated.

Today it seems that water-floatation technology is making a comeback. This is perhaps due to the vast sensory overload that many people in modern-day society experience—not the least of which is produced by the popularity of cell phones, computers, and other technology. In fact, the average person swipes or scrolls through 300 feet of mobile content a day, according to Andrew Keller, global creative director

of Facebook. “That’s almost the length of a football field,” says one [CBS News](#) article.

To avoid any negative association with the name “sensory deprivation,” the experience of using a sensory deprivation tank was renamed REST (Restricted Environmental Stimulation Therapy), sometimes referred to as Flotation-REST.

What Is a Sensory Deprivation Tank?

A sensory deprivation tank is a float tank containing a foot or less of water and 800 pounds (over six pounds of salt per gallon) of [Epsom salts](#) or magnesium sulfate, which is aimed at promoting floatation. In fact, the concentration of magnesium sulfate is so high that it’s difficult for a floater to sub-



Credits: Unsplash

merge underwater—keeping the person afloat in a deeply relaxed yet awake.

The air that surrounds the tank is set at skin temperature, and the room is dark and soundproof. The tank was designed to induce a state of sensory deprivation.

When the lid is closed, the experience involves elimination of all outside sound, sight, smell, and tactile sensation from the pull of gravity.

Why would a person want to deprive oneself completely of external stimulation? The tank is said to provide a deep form of meditation without the normal distractions of discomfort (such as [leg cramps](#) from sitting). There are many pieces of emerging clinical research evidence that support the claims for the health benefits derived from a 60-minute session in

a sensory deprivation tank. These include [pain relief](#), alleviating anxiety, improving mood, [reducing depression](#), and more.

History of the Tank

Neuroscientist John Lilly designed the first sensory deprivation tank in 1954. He wanted to study the effects of sensory deprivation on the mind. By eliminating a person's outside stimulation, Lilly hoped to learn about human consciousness. But, in the 1960s, Lilly (along with many other scientists of the era, such as Timothy Leary) started experimenting with the effects of combining the deprivation tanks with psychedelic drugs such as LSD. This led to a controversial turn in the public's view of Lilly's work, and the sensory deprivation tanks went out of fashion.

In the 1980s the “float tanks,” as they were called, resurfaced and became popular for consumers. During that time, the industry saw a huge spike in sales. The price to actually purchase a tank in the ‘80s was around \$10,000 (clearly out of the budget of many middle-class Americans), and an hour-long floatation session was around \$70.

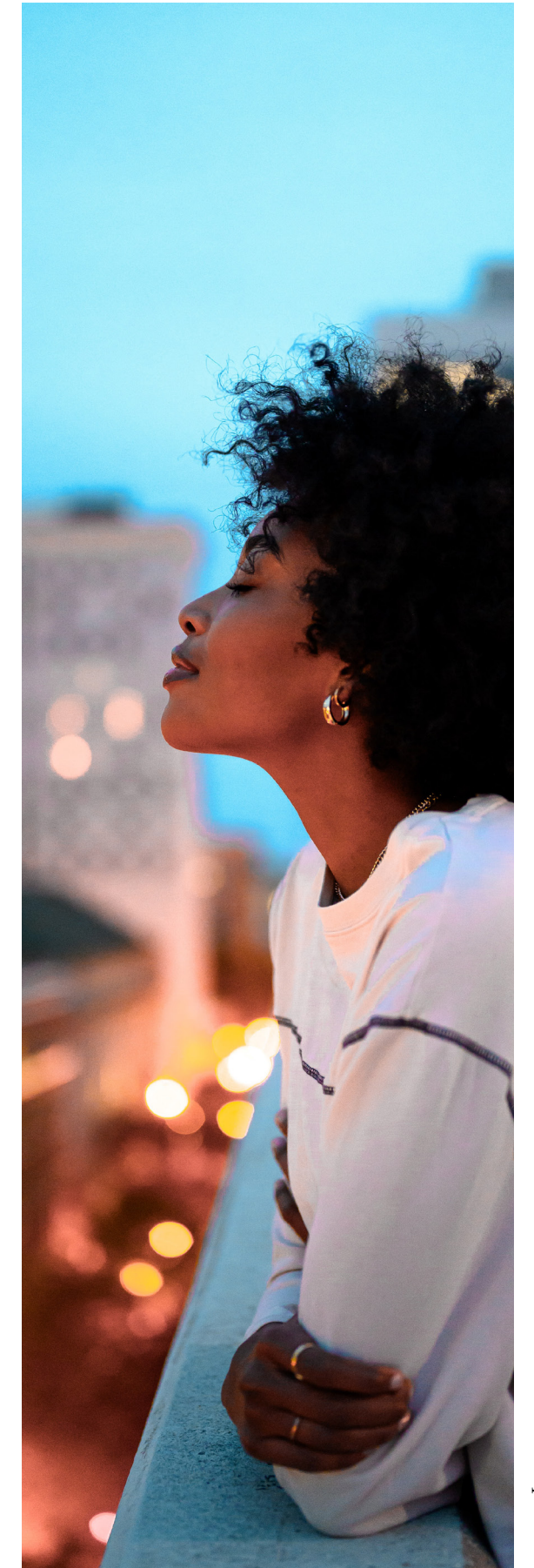
However, the interest in sensory deprivation tanks began to wane with the advent of [AIDS](#). Before accurate information about the spread of the disease was well known, consumers feared contracting AIDS from the use of communal water (for those who purchased hourly float tank rentals).

Health Benefits

Sensory deprivation tanks are said to have many health benefits, including inducing a clear and empty state of mind, improving focus and concentration, and promoting an overall state of relaxation.

Sensory deprivation tanks are known to promote muscle relaxation, lower anxiety, and improve depression.

Other benefits include improving [sleep patterns](#), decreasing pain, and improving well-being.



Credits: Unsplash

Efficacy and Safety

In a 2018 study, published in a peer-reviewed science journal called [PLOS One](#), 50 study participants with anxiety and stress-related disorders engaged in one 60-minute REST session in a sensory deprivation tank. The study participants suffered from one of several conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder, panic disorder, agoraphobia, or social anxiety disorder. Most of them also had depression.

The study concluded that one single 60-minute session induced “a strong reduction in [the] state [of] anxiety and a substantial improvement in mood in a group of 50 anxious and depressed participants.” In addition, the [study](#) found that there were no major safety concerns or during the course of floatation.

In fact, 48 of the 50 study participants stayed in the tank for the entire 60 minutes. This indicates that even people with anxiety, who may show an aversion to new types of treatment, benefited from REST.

A separate 2014 [study](#) of 65 women and men discovered that in relatively healthy participants, stress, depression, anxiety, and pain were significantly decreased, whereas optimism and sleep

quality significantly increased as a result of floatation-REST.A 2007 [study](#) conducted at Karlstad University found that those with stress-related pain from muscle tension obtained relief after 12 floatation sessions. Considerable improvement was noticed for those experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, negative mood, and [poor sleep quality](#). After 33 sessions, study participants exhibited significant improvement in [diastolic](#) (the lower number, while the heart is resting) blood pressure.

Expert Opinion

Although studies conducted as recently as 2018 have shown positive and safe results, providing evidence supporting the claims that sensory deprivation tanks provide many health benefits, some experts are quick to point out that use of the tank is not for everyone.

Dr. Phillip Muskin, a psychiatrist at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital at Columbia University, told [CBS News](#): “Some people might find that it [the sensory deprivation tank] freaks them out.” But Muskin went on to describe some of the positive benefits as well, commenting, “When you empty your mind, be that by breath, floatation, meditation, exercise ... it works by allowing our brains to do some discharge of the junk and let us go back to work.”

Credits: Unsplash





The Tank Today

Modern-day sensory deprivation tanks are very similar to the first tank designed by Lilly. Now that the commercial use of sensory deprivation tanks is again popular, those who use them can often find float centers and spas offering paid float sessions use soft music played at the beginning and end of each float. The sessions last 60 minutes.

Float centers and spas around the country are providing sensory deprivation tank therapy sessions that are easily accessible. The average cost of a sensory deprivation tank today is anywhere from \$12,000 to \$14,000, and the average hourly rental session can be between \$50 to \$100 or even more (depending on where the tank therapy session is rented).

A person gets into the sensory deprivation tank nude and floats in the tank. If the person using the tank is more comfortable wearing a bathing suit, that is permitted.

Guidelines for Sensory Deprivation Tank Users

There are several guidelines for sensory deprivation tank users, including the following:

- Be sure to remove all jewelry
- Shower before and after using the tank.
- Eat a light meal about a half an hour before the session.
- Avoid caffeinated beverages several hours before using the sensory deprivation tank (since caffeine may interfere with the ability to relax).
- Avoid shaving or waxing for at least two to three hours before the session (it can result in burning from the saltwater).
- Women who are menstruating should use a tampon when using the deprivation tank.
- Those who wear contact lenses may want to remove them before the session.

Is The Water Where You Live Wreaking Havoc On Your Skin?

Georgia Murray

You don't have to be a water sommelier to know that not all water is made alike, that some tastes differently than others, that some is hard and some is soft. But what does it really mean for the H₂O from your tap to be hard? As dermatologist Dennis Gross, MD, founder of the eponymous skin-care brand, explains, "hard water" is a term for water that's high in calcium — which is good for stronger bones, but not so good for your skin.

That's exactly what London's nearly nine million residents are dealing with. In fact, Dr. Gross says that England's capital city is one of the worst in regard to the harshness of the water, and it's not without side effects. "Simply bathing in hard water may cause redness and dry skin," he says. "The calcium settles on the skin and changes one's own oil chemistry, which compromises the skin's ability to moisturize itself. It also leads to large pores, acne, rashes, itching, and rosacea." The

buildup can also cause nails and hair to become weaker and more brittle as a result.

Of course, the downsides of hard water aren't limited to Londonites; in the United States, hard water can be found in more than 85% of homes. For dermatologist Anjali Mahto, consultant dermatologist at Skin55 and author of The Skincare Bible: Your No-Nonsense Guide to Great Skin, the biggest concern for those washing with hard water is eczema. "Research has shown that hard water — water that passes through chalk and limestone rock and carbonates along the way — can damage the barrier of the skin and contribute to the risk of developing eczema, as well as increasing its sensitivity," Dr. Mahto explains. If you tend toward eczema already, the hard water can act as a serious irritant resulting in flare-ups.

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Bathing in hard water may cause redness and dry skin...

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Credits: Unsplash

Beauty

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You probably think of steamers as a way to soften and open the pores—that’s not the case...

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Do I Need To Invest In A Facial Steamer? Yes, You Do.

Nerisha Penrose

You’ve heard the claims: facial steamers open your pores, allow product to penetrate deeper, reveal smaller pores, and brighter skin. Plus, for some, it’s the most satisfying part of a facial visit because you immediately feel a sense of ease when your esthetician takes a steamer to your face.

But what are facial steamers really doing?

“You probably think of steamers as a way to soften and open the pores—that’s not the case, as pores aren’t like doors,” explains celebrity esthetician and founder of Renee Rouleau. “Steamers help to make manual extractions easier to prevent too much stress on the skin.”

Here’s how it works: Steam increases the temperature of your

skin, which in turn heats the debris in your pores. The dirt and oils clogging your pores are usually the consistency of hard butter, but with a little heat, they can be melted to more of soft butter. “It only stays soft as long as the skin is moist,” adds Rouleau. Once your pores are open, it’s easier to clean the skin and rid it of any congestion. Usually, your go-to esthetician is the key to unlocking cleaner skin, but as social distancing becomes the new norm and local businesses closed, it might be a while until you can get back in for a treatment. If you’re thinking of taking matters into your own hands, you should invest in a quality facial steamer. The beauty tool can bring the spa experience to your home bathroom.

Ahead, Rouleau breaks down the benefits of at-home steamer use and the best way to use the product, plus some of the best facial steamers hand-picked by skin experts.

What are the benefits of an at-home steamer?

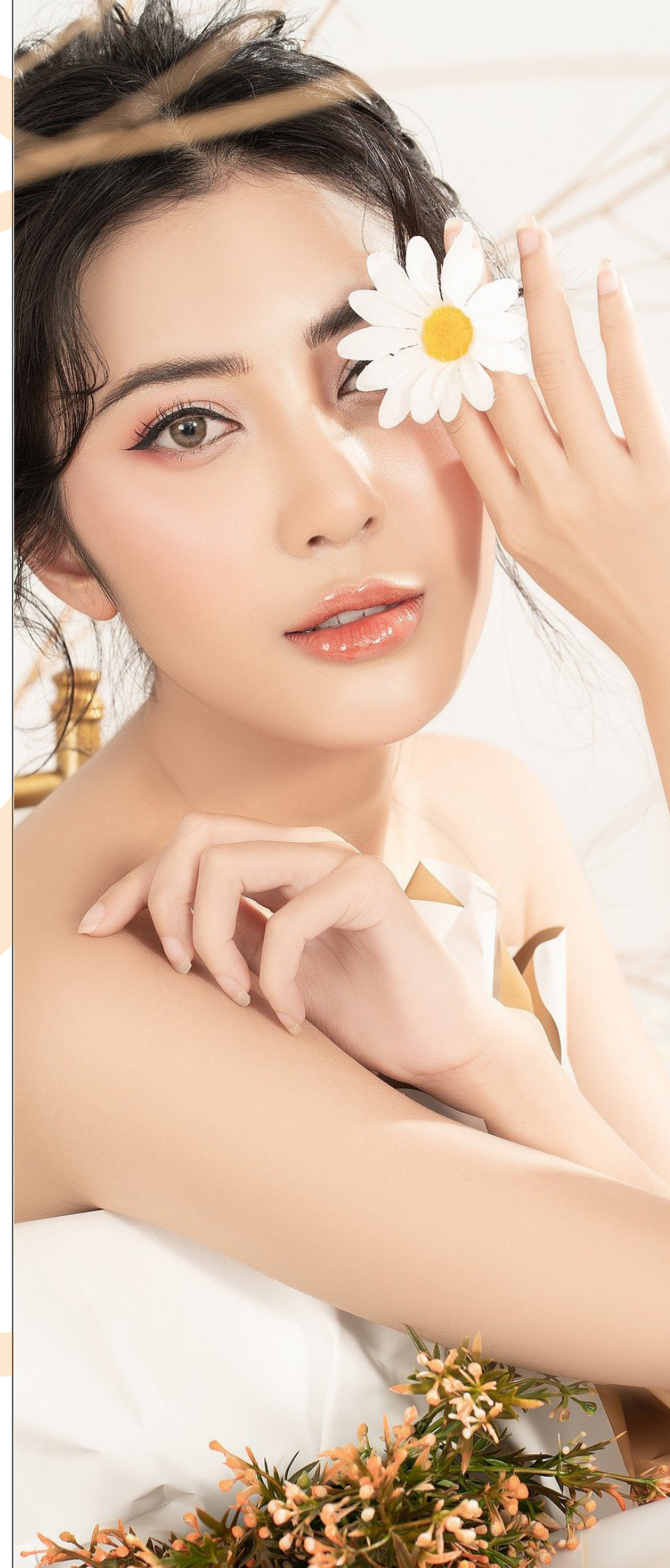
“One of the main benefits of using a facial steamer at home is that it increases blood circulation to the skin by raising the skin’s internal temperature,” Rouleau explains. When you increase the skin’s temperature, oxygen flows to the surface and “feeds the skin cells with new nutrients,” Rouleau adds.

Another benefit of facial steaming is hydration. “As long as you seal it in within 60 seconds after discontinuing the steam,” Rouleau cautions. “You have a one minute window before moisture evaporation occurs, which quickly leads to dehydration. Skin cells are like fish and need water to live, so anytime you infuse water on to the skin, you are getting hydration—but be sure to apply an alcohol-free toner or serum and moisturizer after turning off the steam.”

Where does a facial steamer fall in order of skincare routine?

You should cleanse, steam, apply serum, and finish with a moisturizer.

Go to
page 24 to
See Facial
Steamers We
Reviewed!



Credits: Pixabay

Review: Diffusers



Credits: NY Times

05

Organic Aromas Raindrop 2.0 Nebulizing Diffuser

If you want a device that does the best possible job of dispersing scent to multiple rooms at once and you don't mind spending more money, the Organic Aromas Raindrop 2.0 Nebulizing Essential Oil Diffuser is a nebulizer that mists pure oil, unlike our other picks, which are ultrasonic. (Here's a detailed explanation of the difference.) The lights on this diffuser are dim compared with those on our top pick and runner-up, and there's no cool mist to stare at. It's less expensive than others of its kind, prettier, and far quieter (nebulizers typically make very loud grinding or buzzing sounds). The Raindrop runs for two hours, dispersing oil intermittently, and an automatic shutoff helps avoid overdoing the smell.

Urpower 500ml Aroma Diffuser

This 500 mL model is nearly identical to the Asakuki. We recommend whichever you prefer on price or aesthetics, and both have a strong, rich, stream of mist that's on par with that of our pick. At around double the tank size of our pick, 500 mL diffusers requires fewer refills—and in fact, these diffusers are the only style we tested with a unique low-output mode that can run for up to 16 hours.

Asakuki 500ml Diffuser

If our top pick is sold out or you'd like a slightly bigger tank, we recommend the Asakuki 500ml Essential Oil Diffuser. With as strong a stream of mist as our pick, this diffuser has a larger tank you won't have to refill as often. However, it takes up more space, and the faux-wood look isn't for everyone.

04



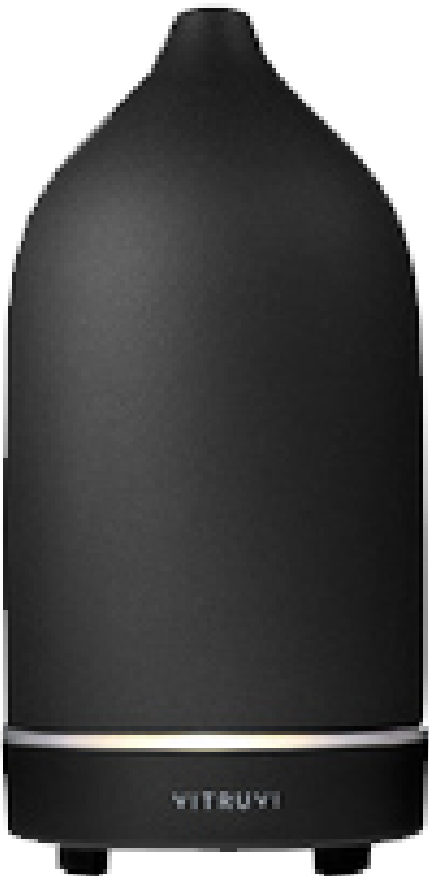
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02

Vitruvi Stone Diffuser

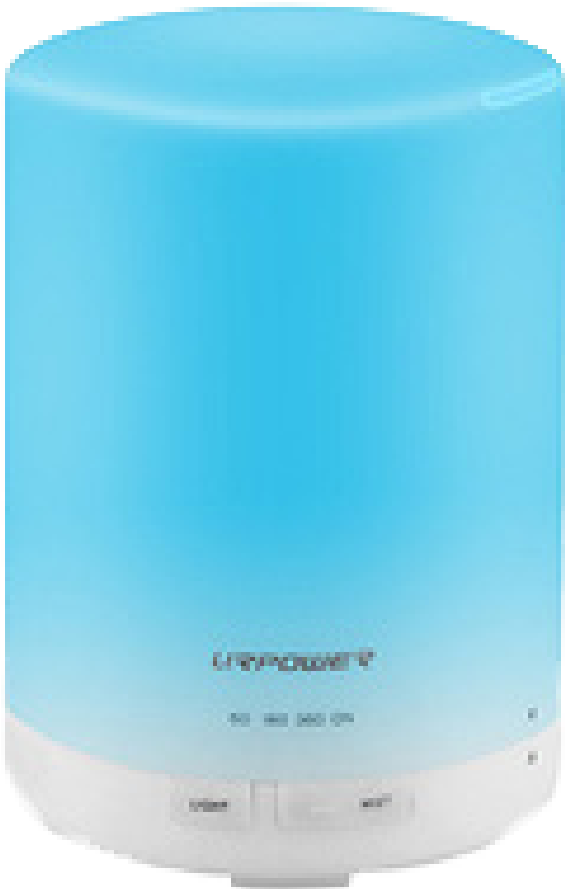
If you'd prefer a diffuser that looks a little nicer and don't need to diffuse scent in a large space, we like the Vitruvi Stone Diffuser. With a porcelain shell in a few neutral colors, it's the only stylish diffuser we tried that both features a strong stream of mist and is easy to use. It's one of the only diffusers we tested with a truly subtle indicator light (positioned on the back of the unit), making it the best choice if you'd like it to run while you're sleeping in a dark room. The tank is on the small side, so you'll have to refill more often, and while it's easy to wipe out, two layers of lid make cleaning and refilling slightly more annoying than with our top picks.



01

Urpower 300ml Aroma Diffuser

We spent more than four weeks testing 17 diffusers, and our favorite is the Urpower 300ml Aroma Essential Oil Diffuser. It puts out a strong stream of mist, has a larger capacity and smaller footprint than much of the competition, and, while affordable, has a clean design that looks better than others at its price.



Review: Steamers

05

Kingsteam Ozone Facial Steamer

“I personally recommend the Kingsteam facial steamer because it elevates the results of my products and keeps my skin hydrated in my dry apartment,” NYC-based esthetician Essence Moore explains. Plus, it also comes with a hair steamer. But most importantly, “it’s affordable and has an ozone feature which is great for purifying the skin.”



04

Panasonic Beauty Nano Facial Steamer

Panasonic’s popular steamer is usually sold out and for good reason. Los Angeles-based esthetician Tracy Hudson is a fan of the steamer for its long-lasting power and wallet-friendly price point.



03

Conair Facial Sauna

You don’t have to break the bank to bring the spa-feel of a steamer to your home. [Dr. Marina Peredo](#) suggests investing in Conair’s steamer because it “comes with a gentle brush that you can use to exfoliate your skin before steaming for best results.” But she warns that at-home users should be careful when extracting. “When extractions are done improperly, they can cause scarring and more harm than the black-head itself. The skin is fragile, so extractions are best left to a professional,” she explains.



Credits: Elle Magazine

02

Dr. Dennis Gross Pro Facial Steamer

The beauty of this facial steamer is its simplicity. “It’s a simple, one-piece design that is lightweight and compact,” NYC-based dermatologist Dr. Marnie Nussbaum says. “The micro-steam technology hydrates and purifies my skin effectively in just 9 minutes.”



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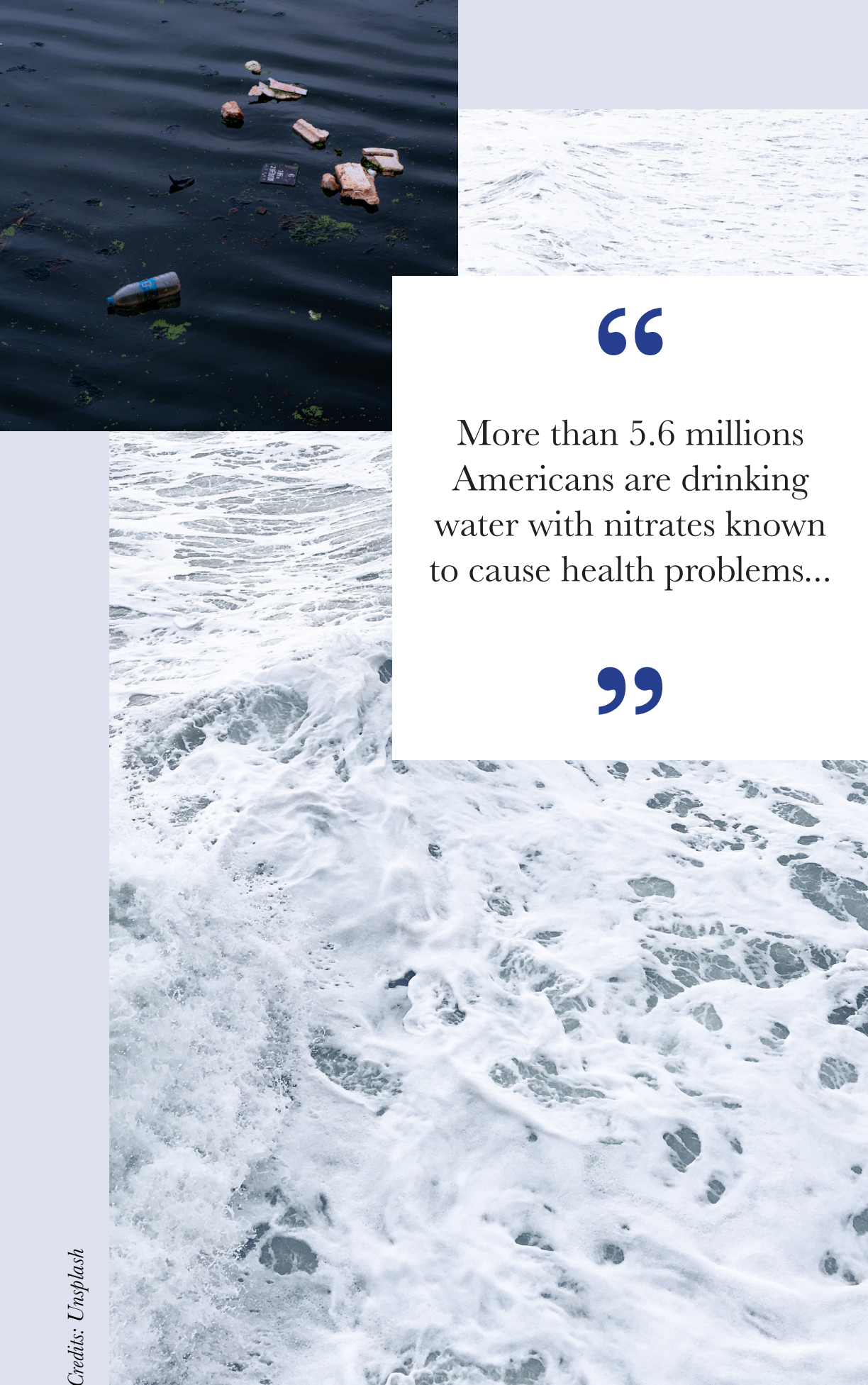


Credits: Elle Magazine

Vanity Planet Aira Ionic Facial Steamer

“It’s a great part of at-home self-care to make you feel good. It feels very warm and soothing on the face,” Rouleau says. Nicole Simpson, the founder of [Amethyst Skincare](#), adds that the steamer is great because you don’t have to bend your neck too far to feel its power. “The steamer ionizes the water molecules, which helps hydrate the skin a bit faster,” she says. “Ionized water typically delivers the best results without the need for a timely process. I caution against over-steaming as it can dehydrate the skin, and that’s what you want to avoid.”

Go to page
12 to Read
about the
Benefits
of Facial
Steamers!



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More than 5.6 millions Americans are drinking water with nitrates known to cause health problems...

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Credits: Unsplash

Current Events

Latinos More Exposed to Harmful Chemicals in Drinking Water

Stacy Cantu-Pawlik

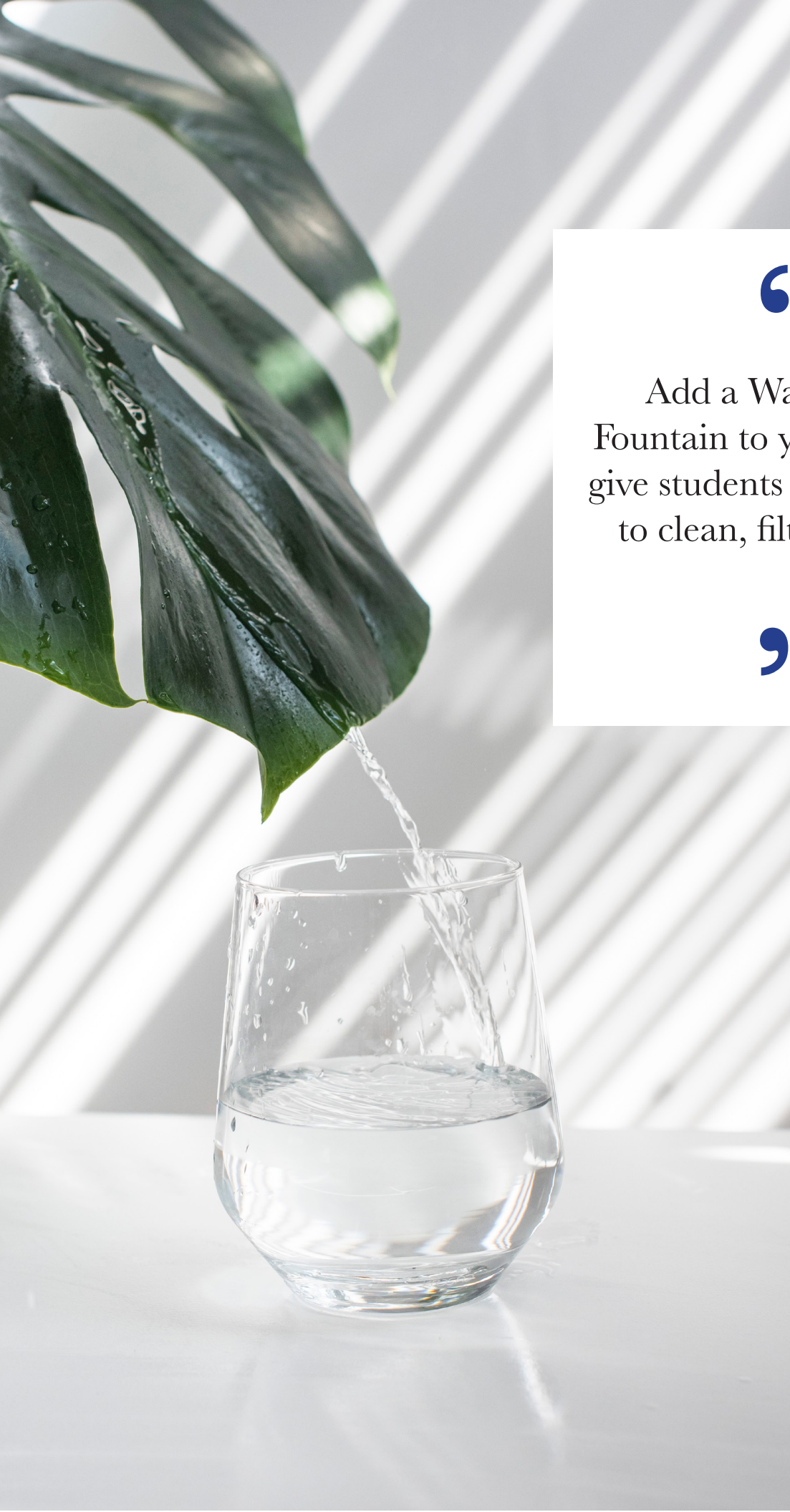
More than 5.6 millions Americans are drinking water with increasingly high amounts of nitrates known to cause health problems, according to a new study.

Latinos are exposed to nitrates in public water

“Since the lead crisis in Flint, Michigan, there’s been a real push to document other types of disparities in drinking water quality in the U.S. and understand the factors that drive them,” said Dr. Laurel Schaider, an environmental chemist at Silent Spring Institute, in a statement. “Because at the end of the day, everyone should have access to clean and safe drinking water regardless of your race.”

Shocking Study Results

For the study, scientists at the non-profit Silent Spring Institute re-search organization assessed drinking water data from 39,466 public water systems. These serve 70% percent of Americans. Coverage of the states and regions included statistical analyses. Some portions of the country were not included the analysis either because they did not have a community water system on record or because we were unable to collect nitrate data for that area. Photo: Silent Spring Institute Approximately 1,650 of these public water systems had average nitrate levels exceeding 5 parts per million (ppm), affecting more than 5.6 million Americans. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidelines for safe drinking water regulate nitrate at 10 ppm. However, numerous studies have found adverse health effects from levels as low as 5 ppm. Adverse health effects include elevated risks for bladder, thyroid,



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Add a Water Bottle Fountain to your school to give students all-day access to clean, filtered water!

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Credits: Unsplash

colon, and kidney cancers. West and Midwest communities had the highest levels of nitrate. “Nitrate is also a good marker for the presence of other contaminants in drinking water,” Schaider said. The study also revealed that public water systems serving the Latino population tended to have the highest concentrations of nitrate in drinking water. Researchers examined their water data with U.S. Census Bureau information on race, ethnicity, poverty, home ownership, and population density. Additionally, they analyzed land-use data on agricultural activity. As the percentage of Latino residents increased, so did the probability of finding nitrate levels over 5 ppm, the scientists found.

Nitrates & Latinos

Nitrates are composed of nitrogen and oxygen that occur naturally in the environment as part of the nitrogen cycle, according to ATSDR.

Water contaminated with nitrates derives from assorted sources such as fertilizers, sewage treatment systems, and animal manure.

There are multiple forms of nitrates that act differently once in the body. The inorganic nitrates that originate in contaminated well water are frequently disregarded as a source of nitrate exposure that can result

in adverse health effects.

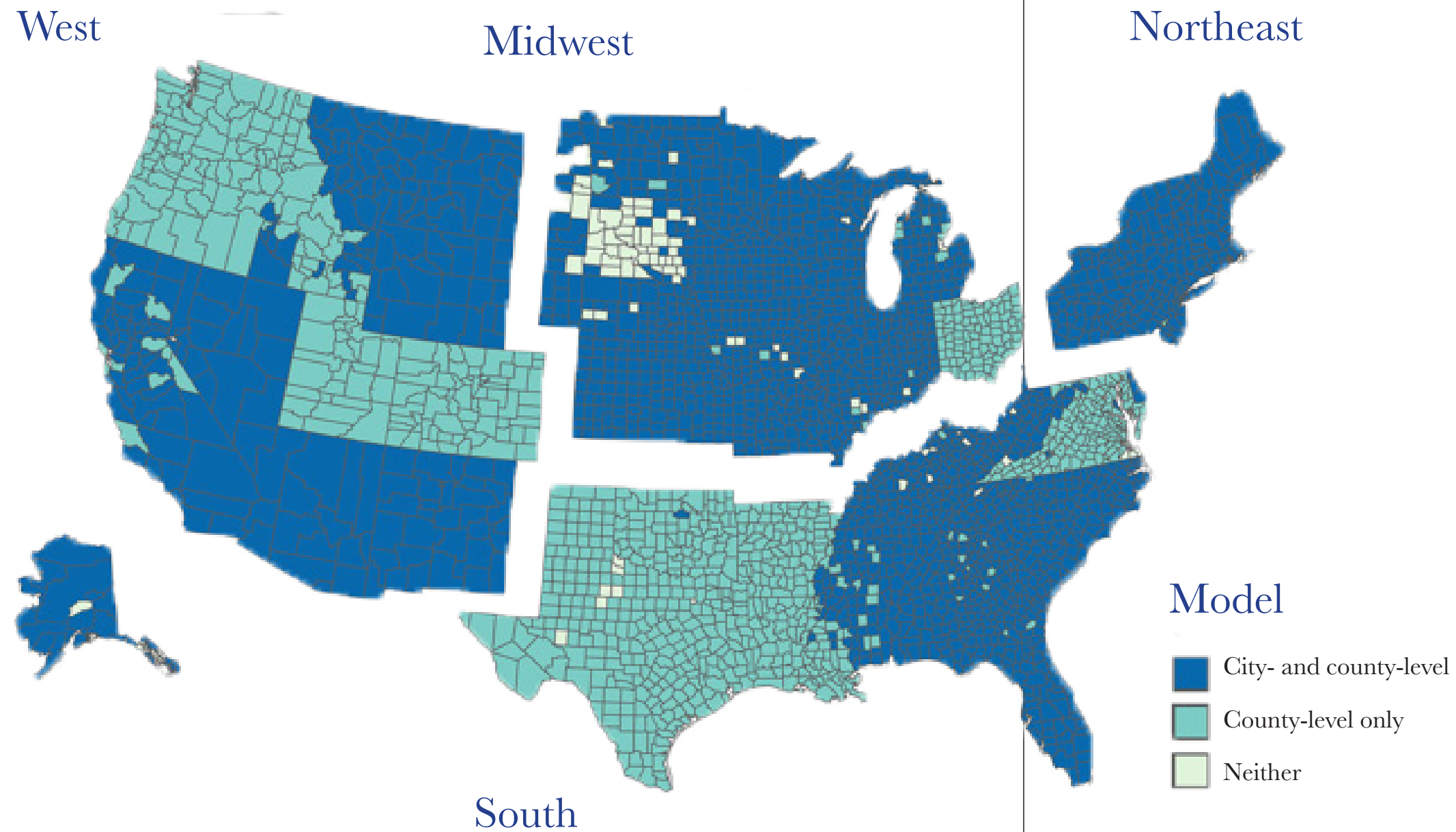
Another issue that may be influencing this situation: language barriers that make it challenging for Latinos seeking support for improving their drinking water quality.

“If that’s the case, then it suggests government programs could do a better job at helping to improve water quality in minority communities,” says Schaider.

You can help, too!

Check out the Salud America! action pack to help you add a Water Bottle Fountain to your school to give students all-day access to clean, filtered water!

Coverage of the States and Regions



Coverage of the states and regions included statistical analyses. Some

portions of the country were not included the analysis either because they

our team

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