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## **FOOD STANDARDS AGENCY (FSA) ADVICE ON BOTTLED WATER DESCRIBED AS ZAM ZAM WATER**

Over the past few years, the Food Standards Agency has become aware of Zam Zam water of uncertain origin being sold on the UK. On testing, some of this water has been found to contain **arsenic** and **nitrate** at levels above those permitted by bottled water legislation. Some personal imports have also been tested and contained similar levels of arsenic and nitrate. Elevated levels of these substances are a potential risk to health. In the absence of any authoritative data on the composition of genuine Zam Zam water it is not possible for UK Authorities to confirm whether water purchased in the UK or brought into the UK as a personal import is genuine Zam Zam water or not. We are therefore advising consumers of personal imports to exercise caution.

### **Consumer health issues**

#### *Arsenic*

Inorganic arsenic is associated with an increased risk of lung, skin and bladder cancer. An independent committee of experts has recommended that exposure to inorganic arsenic should be as low as possible. Based on the levels found previously, in practice occasional drinking of small amounts of water described as Zam Zam would be a very low risk to health.

#### *Nitrate*

High levels of nitrate can affect infants by reducing the ability of blood to transport oxygen around their bodies. So whilst occasional consumption of water described as Zam Zam by adults and older children should not pose any particular health worries, infants should not drink this water.