Study: Crystal removes arsenic cheaply

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A common rust-like crystal may offer an inexpensive way to rid drinking water of hazardous levels of arsenic, Rice University researchers in Houston said.

The findings, researchers said, could mean helping to reduce cancer risk for millions of people in China and Southeast Asia, where high levels of arsenic occurs naturally in some water supplies, The Washington Post said. Arsenic contamination is also a threat to water supplies in Latin America, Africa and the United States.

Researchers found the magnetite particles 12 nanometers wide could bind up to 100 times as much arsenic as the larger filtering particles, yet still be extracted from test liquids inexpensively with a magnet, the Post said.

Researchers said further testing is needed to determine whether the technology is safe and can be used safely and is an improvement over other nanomaterials used in filtration systems.