

Top 7 Ways to Clean and Deodorize Hydration Bladders and Camelbaks

By Wendy Bumgardner

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I love my Camelbak Pixie, but any hydration pack with a bladder requires cleaning and maintenance. Some people can detect a plastic taste with the bladder when it is new and want to get rid of that flavor. Others have bleached their hydration bladder and now want to get rid of the chlorine flavor. Here are some of the most suggested ways to clean and deodorize your hydration bladder.

1. Camelbak Cleaning Kit

The Camelbak Cleaning Kit comes with a curved brush for cleaning inside the water bladder, and a small brush on a line for cleaning the sucker tube. It comes with a couple of cleaning tablets for deep cleaning the water bladder once a month. It also has a handy drying kit including a hanger to attach and a frame to prop the water bladder open to help it dry. While you could find similar household items to use, it is very handy to buy the kit and have the brushes and hanger.

2. Camelbak Cleaning Tablets

Camelbak cleaning tablets are similar to the denture cleansing tablets in their action. They contain chlorine dioxide, which is basically bleach. You use the tablet in a liter of water in the hydration bladder for just 5 minutes, then rinse thoroughly and use. You may find that you want to follow this with a rinse of baking soda, lemon, or vinegar to help remove the chlorine taste.

3. Baking Soda - Bicarbonate of Soda

Mix baking soda with water and allow it to soak in the bladder - anywhere from an hour to overnight. If you are getting ready to use it the next day, it's best to allow it to dry overnight. How much baking soda? I've seen recommendations from 2 tablespoons to half a cup, mixed with hot water to help it dissolve. After it soaks, rinse thoroughly with warm water.

4. Baking Soda and Lemon or Lime Juice

This combination is also recommended, but be warned that it produces a foaming action. Mix a couple of tablespoons of baking soda in a couple of cups of water, put it into the hydration bladder. Now add a similar amount of lemon juice or lime juice and be prepared for the bubbling. Allow that to sit for 30 minutes to overnight and rinse thoroughly with warm water.

5. Denture Cleaning Tablets

Here's the easy way - use denture cleaning tablets. Drop them into water in the pack and allow it to work for 15 minutes as they recommend for dentures. Rinse thoroughly. Some recommend not getting the ones with mint flavor unless you want your water to always taste minty fresh.

6. Baking Soda and Vinegar

Fill the bladder, add 1 tablespoon of vinegar and shake it, then add 1 tablespoon baking powder then shake it. Now drain and rinse thoroughly. This is reported to be good to remove the chlorine taste after bleaching the bladder.

7. Bleach Solution

Add a capful or teaspoon of bleach to enough water to fill the reservoir. Allow to bleach for an hour to overnight. Rinse very thoroughly with 4 or more changes of water. I would recommend then following that with the baking soda and lemon juice or vinegar to help remove the bleach flavor. But this is the best way to kill fungus and bacteria, especially if you see visible growth.