

## GENERAL INFORMATION

The global plastic pollution crisis is not your fault; however, you can be part of the solution. For over 30 years plastic producers have been misleading consumers, making them believe that their products are being effectively recycled by using triangle symbols and numbers to differentiate types of plastics. However, despite our concerted efforts to sort and recycle plastics, 91% of plastics have never been recycled.

-The US makes up 4% of the world's population yet produces 17% of its plastic waste.

-In the US, 76% of plastics go into landfills and 16% is burned producing greenhouse gasses, only 8% are recycled.

-Six times more plastic waste is incinerated in the US than is recycled. Incineration emits dioxins, heavy metals, acidic gases, PCBs and leaves approximately one-third of the material mass in the form of toxic ash, which itself is hazardous waste to be managed.

-Only plastics #1, #2 and #5 can be effectively recycled. When they are recycled, they are generally "downcycled" (made into lower-quality products which eventually end up landfilled as those materials cannot be recycled again).

-Fossil fuel companies are impeding efforts to reduce single use plastics and pushing for increased production as alternative energies such as solar and wind threaten their industry model.

## PLASTIC IN YOUR BODY

-We ingest a credit card worth of plastic on average a week through the food and liquids we consume.

-Microplastics have been found in placentas and are thought to be reducing sperm counts.

-Microwaving plastics (even those labeled "microwave safe") leaches toxic chemical into your food.

## PLASTIC IN THE OCEANS

-15 Million tons of plastic enter our oceans annually, equaling 1 garbage truck a minute.

-By 2025, for every 3 pounds of fish in the ocean there will be 1 pound of plastic.

## THE MYTH OF BIODEGRADABLE PLASTICS

Biodegradable plastic does not decompose in the oxygen-free environment of a landfill, in the ocean, or in your compost pile. They require the heat of a 130F industrial composter to break down. When "biodegradable" plastics are mixed in with "regular" plastics they compromise the entire recycling system.

## RECENT SUCCESS STORIES

- Plastic bags have been banned from NYC since October 2020.
- Mexico City has banned all single use plastics.
- The European Union has banned many single use plastics as of summer 2021.
- Plastics straws in NYC are now being distributed on demand only and have been banned in many states.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Before purchasing a new product (shoes, electronics, housewares, toys, etc.) research its durability, so it does not end up in a landfill shortly after purchasing.
- Avoid drinking bottled water at all costs! There are twice as many microplastics in bottled water as in tap water.
- Carry your own bottle. Encourage delis, and markets to make water available for free or for a fee as well as providing dispensers for other beverages such as coffee, sodas, tea, etc. at a lower price than the bottled equivalent.
- If you do not have a refillable container, purchase aluminum cans rather than plastic. Aluminum has one of the highest recycling rates and can be recycled infinite times.
- Bring a container with you when plan to take food home from a restaurant. Encourage restaurants to package food in paper or aluminum containers with a paper lid.
- When you order take out, ask the restaurant not to include utensils.
- Switch your liquid laundry detergent to concentrated detergent strips.
- Encourage your local supermarket to sell berries, vegetables and fruit in recycled cardboard containers and to carry staples such as grains, flour, etc., in bulk.
- Ask your representatives to support the Break Free From Plastic Pollution Act by adding your signature here: <https://www.breakfreefromplastic.org>

#### ORGANIZATIONS TO FOLLOW AND SUPPORT

- [Beyond Plastics](#)
- [Plastic Pollution Coalition](#)
- [Reusable NYC](#)
- [Zero Waste NYC](#)