

# The Danger of Microplastics



# What are Microplastics?

Microplastics are very small pieces of plastic polluting the Chesapeake Bay. Microplastics are classified as pieces of plastic less than 5 millimeters long.



# Where do Microplastics come from?

Microplastics end up in the Bay through many different sources like,

- Degradation of larger pieces of plastic .
- Microbeads found in cosmetics.
- Synthetic clothes .





# How Do Microplastics End Up In The Chesapeake Bay?

There are three main ways that microplastics enter the Bay.

- Plastics in Landfills
- Littering
- Products that go down the drain

Toothpaste is a great example of how Microplastics, specifically microbeads in cosmetics, end up in the Bay. Everytime you brush your teeth small microplastics wash down the drain and end up in your local water treatment facility. Microplastics aren't able to be filtered out because of their size of their just end up right back in the Bay.



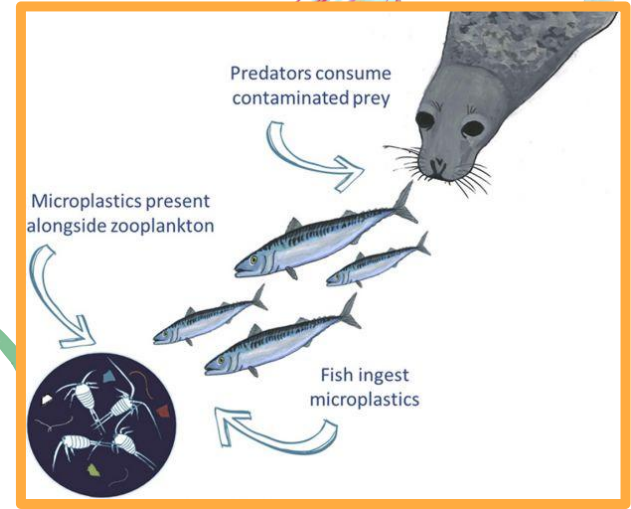


# Why are Microplastics bad?

Microplastics absorb and release toxic chemicals.

Microplastics are also mistaken for food by organisms. When microplastics are ingested they can cause a blockage in the gastrointestinal tract of organisms, tricking them into thinking they are full leading them to starve to death.

Microplastic contamination doesn't just affect the organism who initially ate it, microplastics stick around throughout the entire food web process.



## A QUICK VIDEO ABOUT WHAT WE JUST TALKED ABOUT



# What can you do to help?

Microplastics are one of the biggest pollutants in the Chesapeake bay, **OUR watershed**. You have the power to help fix the microplastic problem.



An illustration of an underwater scene. On the left, a large, branching piece of yellow-orange coral stands on a sandy seabed. In front of the coral are several smaller plants: two pinkish-red feathery ones and one blue feathery one. A red and white striped fish is swimming near the top of the coral. To the right, a yellow and orange clownfish is swimming. The background is white with scattered blue water bubbles of various sizes.

# What Can You Do To Help?

Here are some ways that you can help,

- Reduce your use of single-use plastics
- Recycle properly
- Avoid products, like toothpaste, that contain micro beads
- Volunteer in river or stream clean ups
- Most importantly **SPREAD THE WORD**

Now that you know about the dangers of microplastics it's your job to help spread word in your community. Education is the most important tool in helping to save the environment. Be your local turtles hero and spread the word on microplastics.



# Discussion time!

Now's the time to discuss with your class your thoughts on microplastics.



# It's Activity time!

KAHOOT!

**Kahoot!**

POM POM MAKING!



**THANKS!**





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# RESOURCES

## VECTORS

- Sea life
- Waste
- Watercolor background with red fish
- Pretty watercolor seahorse background
- Watercolor seahorses background
- Watercolor coral collection
- Watercolor coral background
- Watercolor coral background template
- Watercolor coral background template
- Watercolor whale background with message  
ocean is my friend

## PHOTOS

- Carp





## Credits

US Department of Commerce, NOAA, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "What Are Microplastics?" NOAA's National Ocean Service, 13 Apr. 2016, [oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/microplastics.html](https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/microplastics.html).

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