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Over 800 trillion microbeads enter US wastewater daily



Melissa Breyer (@MelissaBreyer)
 Science / Ocean Conservation
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"We're facing a plastic crisis and don't even know it," says author of new report.

In our continued pursuit to scrub the daylights out of everything, we've created quite a mess. From abrasive cleaners to face wash and toothpaste, plastic sand-sized microbeads are added to hundreds of products for a good gritty texture. Given that these products are meant to be rinsed down the drain, the impact on water habitats is substantial.

How substantial? A new **analysis** that used extremely conservative methodology, put the number at 8 trillion microbeads per day going straight into aquatic habitats in the United States – with another 800 trillion remaining in sewage plant sludge which is often distributed to land ... where many of the microbeads find their way into streams and oceans. To get a grasp of how much a trillion is, a trillion seconds adds up to 31,709.8 years.

"We're facing a plastic crisis and don't even know it," said Stephanie Green from Oregon State University, and co-author of the study.



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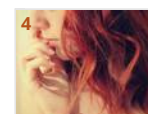
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In the analysis, scientists from seven institutions say that an outright ban on the use of plastic microbeads from products that enter wastewater is the best way to protect water quality, wildlife, and resources used by people, noting that nontoxic and biodegradable alternatives exist for microbeads.

"Contaminants like these microbeads are not something our wastewater treatment plants were built to handle, and the overall amount of contamination is huge. The microbeads are very durable," says Green.

"Microbeads are just one of many types of microplastic found in aquatic habitats and in the gut content of wildlife," says lead author Chelsea Rochman from the University of California at Davis.

"We've demonstrated in previous studies that microplastic of the same type, size and shape as many microbeads can transfer contaminants to animals and cause toxic effects," Rochman says. "We argue that the scientific evidence regarding microplastic supports legislation calling for a removal of plastic microbeads from personal care products."

Although microbeads are just one piece of the larger plastic pollution problem, they are one of the easier ones to control.

"The probability of risk from microbead pollution is high, while the solution to this problem is simple," the study concluded.

A number of places have **already banned** the use of microbeads in personal care products. Until they are prohibited across the board, check banthemicrobead.org for which products do and don't contain them.

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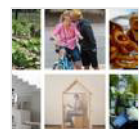
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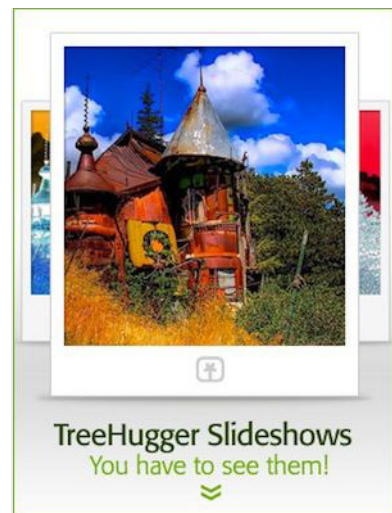


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Michael J. Schmitz · 13 days ago

Its funny how your starting to think about plastics while our planet has been & is being invaded by those using our weather against us since 1977. My Global Teams & I helped in turning off Global Warming in 2012/ confirmed by other Nations while NASA'S Hubble Telescope took pictures of THE BIG BANG when Global Warming ended, we figured it triggered Halley's Comet into returning to its original mission & collided with the incoming so called Astroid 13 years from earth. I really wonder whats going to happen in 2018. When the GREY looking Aliens that created Global Warming that we turned off figure out that their counterparts will never arrive. The THE BIG BANG'S aftermath showed 10 large chunks drifting in different directions 13 years from earth of the incoming ASTEROID, in my opinion a ALIEN space craft destroyed, I wonder what the Alien scout ship & the others we've been tracking under our oceans & in outerspace are going to do. Global Command / Mike

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Jack Rodgers · 14 days ago

Time for politically correct ninjas and snipers?

We are just overloaded with the flood of info on how bad our products are and how our world is going down the tubes. \$5000 for one tuna? Extinction is certain.





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