

You Are Slowly Turning Into Plastic: Here's Why

Microplastics are present everywhere; in salt, tapwater, beer, honey, and even on the dust particles in your room. Why is this so? Let's explore further.

Plastics are a revolutionary scientific achievement that allows humanity to manufacture a myriad of useful items quickly and cheaply. These molecules are constructed from modifying natural polymers found in petroleum into a flexible yet ultra-strong structure. Ironically, a material so strong is used in things we dispose of after a single use.

Plastic has become commonplace these days; to the point where this valuable discovery is treated as nothing more than trash to be put away. To the common individual, once you throw it away in the bin, it's gone forever. In reality, the amount of plastics accumulating in the oceans is of such great magnitude that it is slowly overcoming global marine life in weight.

These waste plastics when exposed to sunlight decompose into smaller microscopic particles which are consumed by marine life. Thus, microplastics travel up the food chain and find their way into our bodies. This effect is so severe that according to studies 93% of humans globally have Bisphenol-A (BPA) in their urine. Bisphenol A interrupts the hormonal system of the human body and results in a whole host of diseases.

So what can we do about this problem you may ask? Should we just ban plastic? The solution is unfortunately not that simple. It turns out that using non-plastic materials may harm the ecosystem too. A popular example is using cotton reusable bags in place of plastic. On the outside, this may seem like a good idea, however, the energy requirements for manufacturing a simple plastic bag are so low that you would need to use a cotton bag 7000 times to conserve an equal amount of energy.

What we need is innovation. A push for the research of new alternatives that can effectively replace and/or modify this deathly threat that looms over all of humanity.

References

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