



## The Plastic Problem

- **15+ million metric tons** of plastic enter the ocean each year.
- Experts predict that there will be 1 lb. of plastic for every 3 lbs. of fish in the oceans by 2025.
- A mere **9%** of all plastics are recycled;
- About 47 percent of plastic waste generated worldwide is from packaging.
- Every year, plastics add as much greenhouse gases to the atmosphere as 189 new coal plants.
- 210 new petrochemical facilities which make plastic have been built in the US since 2010. An additional 133 petrochemical facilities are under construction or in the planning stages.

**Plastic when it breaks down becomes microplastics. We eat, swallow, or breathe 2,000 particles of plastic per week - equivalent to the weight of a credit card.**

### Plastic Bottles

- Plastic bottles/cups last **450 years**.
- **One million** plastic bottles are bought around the world every minute.
- **Less than 1/3** of all plastic bottles will be recycled.
- Plastic bottles and bottle caps rank as the **3rd** and **4th** most collected plastic trash items.
- Producing bottled water requires **2,000 times** the energy needed to produce tap water.
- Plastic packaging loops holding 6 pack bottles together last **400 years**.



### Styrofoam (Polystyrene)

- Styrofoam lasts **FOREVER!**
- **Does not biodegrade** and may persist in the environment for more than **1 million years**.
- It's lightweight, floats, and easily travels from streets and through storm drains out to the ocean.
- Styrofoam cups and containers leach toxins into the food and drinks they contain and the process is accelerated by heat as well as contact with fatty and acidic foods.

### Plastic Straws

- Plastic straws cannot be recycled and persist in the environment for at least **200 years**.
- Americans use **500 million** plastic straws each day – enough to circle the Earth 2.5 times.
- Straws are a necessity for some people with disabilities, which is why we advocate for “**straws on request**” as well as paper or reusable straws.



### Plastic Utensils

- Plastic utensils last **100+ years**
- It's added to your takeout bag along with condiments you never requested. You take it home and use your silverware.
- It's an expense to the business and adds waste to the environment.

### Plastic Bags/Film

- Plastic bags are used for an average of **12 minutes** but can last for more than **20 years**.
- Plastic bags are one of the **top five** items found during beach and river cleanups.
- Plastic bags, which **resemble jellyfish**, are the most commonly found synthetic item in sea turtles' stomachs.



## What Single-Use Plastics Should We Reduce or Stop Using?

- **In restaurants and takeout orders:** All single-use plastics:
  - Cups
  - Knife, spoon, fork, straws, stirrers
  - Packaging
  - Styrofoam
  - Plastic wrap
- **In Your Home:** Keurig cups, straws, plastic wrap, zip-lock type bags, single-use storage containers.
- **When Shopping:** reduce purchases in plastic packaging and/or look for recycled packaging.

## Actions You Can Take

- Bring your own reusable shopping and produce bags to grocery and retail stores.
- Say “**NO**” to single-use plastic (utensils, plastic bags, cups, especially straws, and Styrofoam); **encourage your favorite restaurants to only provide these “upon request”.**
- Bring your own reusable container for take-out food or leftovers from your restaurant.
- Say “**NO**” to disposable cups especially Styrofoam cups; **encourage restaurants to switch to alternatives.**
- Skip the plastic bottle, drink beverages from reusable bottles or mugs
- Reduce use of single-use plastic storage containers (Ziplock bags); use silicon bags or glass Tupperware containers
- Buy fresh fruits & vegetables to avoid buying those in plastic packaging.
- No balloons – use eco-friendly decorations.
- Choose products made from and packaged in recycled materials.
- Purchase food, like cereal, pasta, and rice from bulk bins and fill a reusable bag or container.
- Learn to recycle properly via **RecycleCT.com**.
- Keep plastic bags out of curbside recycling, because the load will be considered contaminated.