# ONE TUBE OF FACIAL SCRUB CAN CONTAIN MORE THAN 330,000 PLASTIC MICROBEADS!

Have you ever used an exfoliating scrub or toothpaste? Chances are, it contained plastic microbeads. These tiny round beads look innocuous—but they’re actually pretty evil.

When we use products that contain them, these plastic microbeads go down the drain. Because they’re too small to be filtered—less than a grain of salt—they end up in our rivers, lakes and oceans. In the United States, **we release 8 billion plastic microbeads into the environment each day. That's nearly 3 trillion each year.**

Once in the water, plastic microbeads attract persistent organic pollutants like flame retardants and other industrial chemicals linked to human health problems—even cancer. A single plastic microbead can be one million times more toxic than the water around it. These pollutants work their way up the food chain—and onto our plates. **A study found that**[**one-quarter of all fish sold in California markets had microplastics and fibers in their guts**](http://www.5gyres.org/animals/)**.**

But the thing to remember about plastic microbeads is: You can avoid them. It’s simple:

**Pledge to go #beadfree: avoid products that contain polystyrene, polyethylene, polypropylene, polylactic acid (PLA), or polyethylene terephthalate.**

### A SINGLE PLASTIC MICROBEAD CAN BE 1 MILLION TIMES MORE TOXIC THAN THE WATER AROUND IT.

Why is the fight against plastic ocean pollution so important? Basically, it comes down to the animals that are affected—especially humans. Plastics attract and store persistent organic pollutants like flame retardants and other industrial chemicals, which have been linked to human health problems—even cancer.

As marine life eat the plastic, these pollutants work their way up the food chain—and onto our plates. Larger pieces of plastic are also a problem.

More than 600 species are impacted by plastic, through ingestion or entanglement—both of which can sicken or even kill them. Birds, fish, turtles, dolphins, sharks and even whales can be poisoned or trapped by plastic waste. And humans depend on the ocean for food and a healthy ecosystem that maintains the balance of greenhouse gases. Scientists agree: If the oceans die, we die.

But the thing to remember about the problem of plastic ocean pollution is this we can fix it! It’s simple: Pledge to go **#plasticfree** by avoiding the top 4 sources of single use plastic—[plastic bags](https://www.5gyres.org/plastic-bags), [water bottles](http://plastic-bottles/), [styrofoam cups](https://www.5gyres.org/styrofoam), [straws](https://www.5gyres.org/plastic-straws), + [microbeads](https://www.5gyres.org/microbeads).  **Action you can take today:** When you order a drink say, “No straw please!”