**IT’S THE SPONGY STUFF THAT MAKES UP YOUR COFFEE CUP AND LID. BUT POLYSTYRENE ISN’T JUST ANY PLASTIC**

Toxic styrene—the primary component of polystyrene—is proven to be carcinogenic to animals, and is a probable human carcinogen. It can migrate from containers into food and drinks when it comes in contact with fatty or acidic foods, and when heated—like for your coffee or take out.

How Styrofoam is made is also dangerous to the environment: Although the industry has phased out chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), polystyrene production releases greenhouse gases that harm the ozone layer and contribute to global warming. The EPA ranks its manufacturing as the fifth worst global industry in terms of hazardous waste creation.

Polystyrene is rarely recycled, as it’s difficult for most facilities to process it. Most of the time, we throw it away:

**AMERICANS TOSS AWAY 25 BILLION STYROFOAM CUPS EACH YEAR**

Typically, it becomes trash—but because it’s so lightweight and breaks easily, Styrofoam often falls into storm drains and is washed out to sea. In fact, one California study showed [**Styrofoam is the second most common form of plastic found on our beaches**](http://www.5gyres.org/truth-about-recycling/)**. That's a**[**serious problem for humans and other animals**](http://www.5gyres.org/animals/)**.**

But the thing to remember about styrofoam is: *You can avoid it*. It’s simple: Pledge to go **#foamfree**by avoiding products that contain polystyrene (PS).

**12 Minutes**. That's the average amount of time a plastic bag is used. Yet plastic bags impact our environment—and our health—for decades. That’s because globally, [**only one percent of plastic bags are recycled each year**](http://www.5gyres.org/truth-about-recycling/)**.** The world’s manufacturers make as many as five trillion plastic bags annually meaning that each year, as many as 4 trillion, 950 billion plastic bags are trashed—[many end up in our ocean where they can harm animals](http://www.5gyres.org/animals/) and the ecosystem.

**Call to action on a nation-wide plastic bag ban. Remember *you can avoid* single-use plastic bags! Simple: Bring your own reusable bag to stores. Ask store managers to switch to “bag on request”.**