
BEAT
PLASTIC
POLLUTION
World Environment Day 2018
(WED-2018)
PUNJAB
Punjab Pollution Control Board
Vatavaran Bhawan, Nabha Road, Patiala

PURPOSE

World Environment Day (WED) is a vehicle for encouraging world wide awareness and action for the environment. It serves as the 'people's day' for doing something positive for the environment, galvanizing individual actions into a collective power that generates an exponential positive impact on the planet. The celebration of this day provide us with an opportunity to broaden the basis for an enlightened opinion and responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in preserving and enhancing the environment. WED enables everyone to realise not only the responsibility to care for the Earth, but also reminds one and all of their individual power to become agents of change.

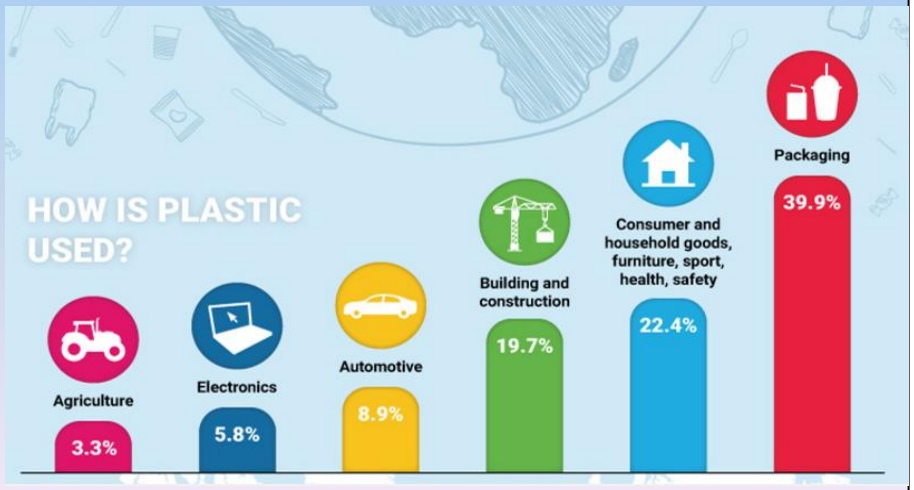
BEAT PLASTIC POLLUTION

"Beat Plastic Pollution" the theme for World Environment Day 2018, is a call to action for all of use to come together to combat one of the great environmental challenges of our time. Chosen by this year's host, India, the theme of World Environment Day 2018 invites us all to consider now we can make changes in our everyday lives to reduce the heavy burden of plastic pollution on our natural places, our wild life and our own health.

WED 2018 urges governments, industries, communities, and individuals to come together and explore sustainable alternatives and urgently reduce the production and excessive use of single use plastic polluting our oceans, damaging marine life and threatening human health.

PLASTIC PRODUCTION

- 8.3 billion metric tons of virgin (non-recycled) plastic has been produced since 1950 and generating about 6.3 billion metric tons of plastic waste.
- 9% of that waste has been recycled which only delays its final disposal.
- 12% has been incinerated which is the only way to permanently dispose off plastic, but at the cost of environmental pollution as it generates toxic gases like Dioxins.
- The remaining 79% of plastic waste has accumulated in landfills and the natural environment.
- 12 billion metric tons will enter landfills or the environment by 2050 if current production and waste management trends continue.



WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT PLASTIC POLLUTION

The invention of plastic in 1907 was considered a breakthrough. Plastic products soon became omnipresent in our daily lives. For many years, we only perceived the benefits of plastic and knew little of the damaging consequences for human health, natural ecosystem and the climate.

If you have recently walked down the city streets, in the country side, or even along a beach on a remote island, you might notice something in common: “Plastics”. Plastics are some of the most commonly littered items in the world and they are drowning our planet.

Plastics are a problem mostly due to their un-biodegradable nature, the materials used for plastic production (hydrocarbon molecules—derived from the refining of oil and natural gas), and the challenges behind properly discarding them.

PLASTIC POLLUTION IN THE OCEAN/MARINE LIFE

Plastic never fully degrades but over time it breaks into smaller and smaller pieces. Eventually it becomes small enough to enter the bloodstream of marine organisms. Since the organisms cannot ever digest or process the plastic, it remains present until the organism is eaten. This passes all the plastic on to its predator, which is usually fish. If that fish is caught, then the plastics will be passed on to whichever human consumes it.

MICROPLASTICS

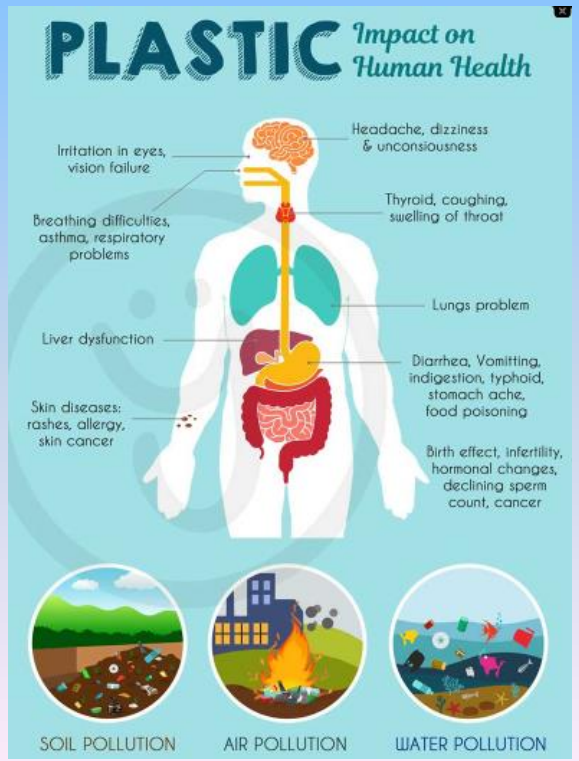
When plastics break down due to exposure to water, sun or other elements they can break into tiny pieces -so tiny, most of them cannot be seen with the naked eye. These small plastic fragments are now everywhere. When you drink water, eat fish or other seafood, or when you add salt to your meals, chances are you can also be ingesting tiny pieces of plastic. Those particles -called microplastics- are a contaminant which is now present in the oceans, water ways, the soil and even in the food that we eat. Once plastic enters the bloodstream of an organism it will never be processed out. The plastic and the toxins it has absorbed will bioaccumulate as they travel up the food chain to a top predator, often a human.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- Prevent the creation of micro plastics by being careful not to toss plastic products in water ways, beaches or open spaces.
- Pick up trash especially plastics whenever seen, especially in ponds, streams, rivers, beaches, wherever possible.
- Look up products and choose not to buy products containing microbeads. Choose products that have natural exfoliators instead.
- Consider changing the way of washing the clothes to reduce the number of microfibers that are released.
- Consider purchasing items made of natural fibers, when possible.

PLASTICS AND YOUR OWN HEALTH

Plastic pollution is not only damaging the health of our planet but after decades of producing trillions of oil-based plastic items, the discovered negative consequences to human health are startling. Many plastics contain phthalates (DEHP) and the chemical bisphenol-A (BPA), now recognized as a hazard to public health and the human body. Both chemicals are potentially harmful to human hormones and reproductive systems. When heated in the Microwave, these chemicals can leach out into the food they contain.



STEPS TOWARDS MINIMIZING "PLASTIC POLLUTION FOOT PRINTS"

REDUCE

CONSUME WHAT YOU NEED

Many plastic products you may frequently use are generally unnecessary – do you really need a straw to drink a glass of water? It is important to only consume what you need, especially when it comes to plastics. Many of the most commonly disposed off plastic products have viable alternatives. Always ask yourself if you can get the same product without consuming plastic before you buy something.

REFUSE

TIPS TO REFUSE PLASTICS

• Plastic bags are one of the biggest sources of plastic pollution. Refusing the plastic shopping bags given away at retailers and grocery stores is easy. If you need a bag to carry your purchases, bring reusable canvas or **compostable bags** instead.

• Take a little extra time while doing your shopping, select products without plastic packaging and always be sure to avoid or even boycott products that are excessively wrapped in plastic.

• When you go clothes shopping, it is best to avoid fabrics with plastic microfibers such as nylon and polyester.

REUSE

WAYS YOU CAN REUSE IN YOUR DAILY LIFE:

• You can buy reusable mesh bags that replace the plastic bags you use for bulk produce at the grocery store.

• You can purchase canvas shopping bags and leave them in your car for anytime you go shopping.

• Get a reusable water bottle instead of buying plastic ones and throwing them out.

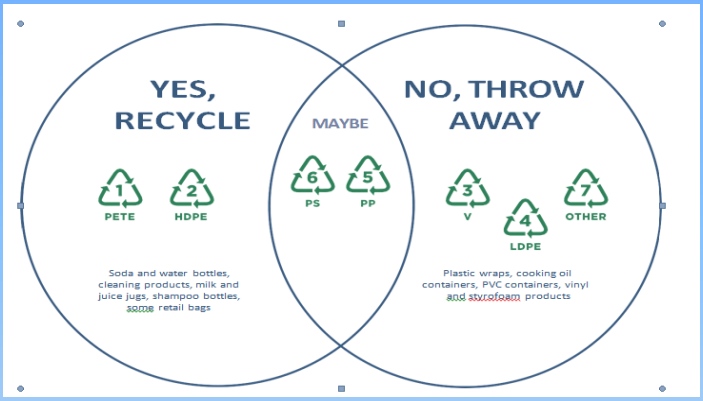
• When you finally decide to get rid of old clothes, toys, furniture, or electronics, donate them rather than throwing them away.

• Use dishes, glasses, and metal silverware instead of their plastic counterparts.

• Many food containers from restaurants are durable enough to be reused for kitchen storage.

RECYCLE

Recycling produces environmental and economic benefits. It reduces energy consumption and the need for new material to be used while slowing the rate of resource depletion. It decreases pollution from industrial waste and limits the amount of waste sent to the landfill.



REMOVE

HELP THE EFFORT TO REMOVE PLASTIC

- Start a beach or river clean-up in local community.
- Support the work of organizations removing plastic from the environment.
- Purchase innovative products created from recovered ocean or environmental plastics.