

What are Microplastics?

Microplastics are tiny pieces of plastic that are harmful to our oceans and marine life. They are often added to face scrubs or toothpastes as an exfoliating ingredient.



Source: National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration

How You Can Help

All water on Earth eventually reaches the ocean, and many microplastics are too small to be removed by filtering. You have the power to reduce the amount of microplastics that are entering the ocean by making responsible product choices.

Ingredients to Avoid

- Polyethylene (PE)
- Polypropylene (PP)
- Polyethylene terephthalate (PET)
- Polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA)
- Nylon (PA)

Source: Ban the Microbead, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), 2019

Alternative Ingredients

Many exfoliating products exist without the use of microplastics. Some alternative ingredients include:

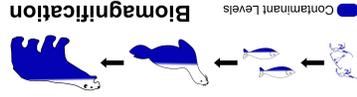
- Ground Walnut Shells
- Ground Pumice
- Silica
- Sugar
- Salt



Claire Messmer
Colorado State University

A consumer's guide to marine friendly cosmetic products

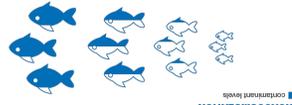
Making Ocean Smart Product Choices



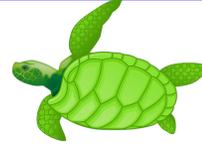
What is Biomagnification?
Biomagnification is the increase of the concentration of a pollutant in a food chain. When predators eat prey that have ingested microplastics, they have now ingested the microplastics too.

What is Bioaccumulation?

Bioaccumulation is the increase in the amount of a pollutant in a single organism over time. Microplastics accumulate in the individuals that accidentally ingest them.



Your Choices Matter
Although these might seem like small changes, switching to products with marine friendly and reef safe ingredients can have a large impact on marine life, from fish and turtles, to sharks and whales.



How to use this guide: Cut along the black lines, and fold along the blue lines. Keep this card with you in your wallet or purse, so that you can easily reference it when shopping for different cosmetic products.