

Microbeads

Microbeads are tiny pieces of plastic that have been added to personal hygiene products such as toothpastes and body scrubs. When we use these products, the microbeads wash down the drain and cannot be filtered out by sewerage systems. They end up in our aquatic habitats such as rivers, lake and oceans. The microbeads soak up toxic chemicals in the water and can end up being eaten by fish and small sea creatures. These animals may die by poisoning, or else end up as food for bigger fish, many of which are caught for human consumption. This is how the toxins of plastics work their way up the food chain and into the food that we eat.



Carry out a research project on **Microbeads**.

Some ideas you could investigate:

- The types of products that microbeads are found in. *Tip: When checking the ingredients of products for microbeads its name may appear different. Look out for ingredients such as polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP), polyethylene terephthalate (PET), polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) and nylon.
- The impact microbeads have on wildlife, habitats and humans.
- Many countries are now banning microbeads. Research Clean Coasts and the 'Beat The Microbead' campaign.
- How you can stop using microbeads.
- Some alternative materials that could be used in place of microbeads.
- Ingredients that can be used to make natural body scrubs.

Resources:

http://www.adventurescience.org/microplastics.html?gclid=Cj0KEQjwhtO7BRctwuO9gfTH-fQBEiQAdJ8FY-uptNC0CxqyJmZRWkovIT_ghmLI0QumO2pljQJfLR4aAsaz8P8HAQ

<https://www.beatthemicrobead.org/>

<http://www.5gyres.org/microbeads/>