

WHY QUIT PLASTIC?

Since gaining popularity in the 1950's, we've produced over 18 trillion pounds of plastic. Plastic that is not going anywhere. And production is on the rise. Once favored for its permanence, we're now realizing the detrimental effects of plastic's lifespan.

So what happens to plastic when we discard it?

RECYCLING: Of the 7 types of plastic in existence, 4 are recyclable. Of the plastic waste produced since 1950, less than 9% was recycled. Most recyclable plastics are only suitable for recycling once, so recycling only delays, rather than prevents, plastic disposal to landfill, incineration or ocean. Recycling is a global commodity, exported from first world countries to third world countries who profit from accepting our waste. China, once the biggest importer of recycled materials, has stopped accepting foreign recyclables in an effort to crack down on pollution. Recycling is less of a solution now more than ever. Now that our waste has no where to go, we'll be forced with the reality that there is no "away."

LANDFILLS: Where the majority of discarded plastic goes. Plastic does not break down, or biodegrade. Instead, it breaks up into macro and micro plastics, leaching BPA and other carcinogens and hazardous chemicals into soil and waterways in the process.

INCINERATION: Many countries resort to burning plastics for fuel and waste management - around 25% of plastics worldwide. Plastic releases dioxins when burned - highly toxic compounds linked to disease, birth defects, organ damage and developmental disorders in both humans and wildlife - as well as carbon dioxide and monoxide, the primary contributors of global warming and air pollution.

OCEAN: Around 8 million tons of plastic enters the ocean every year - around 10% of all plastics produced. 80% of that is waste mismanagement from land - largely single-use packaging - the rest from fishing debris or dumping. Plastic debris kills an estimated 100,000 marine mammals annually, as well as millions of birds and fishes. A study found that 73% of fish caught at mid-ocean depths in the Northwest Atlantic had microplastic in their stomachs. These microplastics are toxic on their own, but they also act like sponges, soaking up other toxins in the water. They contaminate the entire food chain, all the way back to us - microfibers have been found in a wide range of consumer products.

A plastic bag was recently found in the Mariana Trench, the farthest corner of the world.
It seems nothing is untouched by plastic.

The truth is, when we throw something "away," there is no away.