

## **Response to Research on Release of Micro and Nano Plastics from Plastic Teabags**

A recent study examined the use of plastic teabags. The Tea Association of the USA, Inc. would like to assure all consumers that tea brewed in teabags is safe to consume.

Materials used to create teabags, including nylon and PET, have been assessed by the FDA<sup>1</sup> and other respected, independent agencies around the world<sup>2</sup> for their safe use under various conditions of hot food and beverage contact applications. As explained in the study, the health effects of consuming micro- and nano-plastics to humans are not known. It should be noted that this research was not conducted on teabags made of PLA (polylactic acid, a biodegradable and compostable material) which is derived from cornstarch.

According to Darena Schymanski from the Chemical and Veterinary Investigations Office Münsterland-Emscher-Lippe, "The fact that there is a presence of microparticles is quite plausible, but how much that really is, remains unclear." Schymanski explains there are weaknesses in the study methodology saying, "it is not clear what percentage of the sample was measured, and the projection of the number of particles from the sample to the total amount is questionable. In addition, contamination from the outside, from the air, is a major problem in studies on microplastics: Up to 33 percent of house dust is microplastic. For an analysis like these one would have to work with a sterile workbench, a so-called "clean bench". Apparently that did not happen here."

In reference to the study findings, according to Hans Bouwmeester, associate professor at Wageningen University in agrotechnology and food sciences, "A cup of tea can contain 16 micrograms of plastics. That seems a lot, but a grain of sugar weighs 1 milligram. So, it is a fraction of a grain of sugar."

Tea is the second most widely consumed beverage in the world after water. Consumers should feel safe continuing to consume and enjoy the many varieties of tea for its health promoting and protective effects. There is a growing, significant body of science demonstrating the health benefits of tea, including in the areas of cardiovascular disease, cancer and cognitive function.

1. *Food and Drug Administration*
2. *ILSI – International Life Sciences Institute, Japan Food Research Laboratories*

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***Founded in 1899, the Tea Association of the USA, Inc. was formed to promote and protect the interests of the tea trade in the United States and is the recognized independent authority on Tea.***

**Study:** <https://pollockpr.egnyte.com/dl/mT1LRih2PL>

**Supplementary Materials:** <https://pollockpr.egnyte.com/dl/OcC1egh64V>