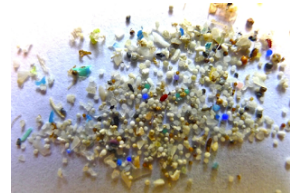


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Image Source (<http://www.treehugger.com/clean-water/3-companies-commit-removing-plastic-beads-their-body-products.html>)

By: Lauren Hart, Staff Member

We live in a society where we fluff and buff ourselves within an inch of our lives. Although I may like to think I'm immune to advertising, I am no exception to this rule: I enjoy a good body scrub as much as the next person. What hadn't occurred to me, however, was the effect I was having on the environment and our natural resources.

Many home-care products have "exfoliating" properties. These are designed to help rid our bodies of excess and dead skin. These exfoliating products vary from natural sources to tiny microbeads of plastic, small pieces of plastic designed to scrub and then easily wash away.[1] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftn1) These microbeads are a small subset of the broader term, "microplastics." [2] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftn2)

These seemingly harmless beads of plastic are wreaking havoc on our natural water resources. The beads themselves are able to "absorb and retain" chemical contaminants, which makes them more frightening.[3] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftn3) Runoff of these toxic little plastics can directly reach our oceans [4] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftn4) and lakes.[5] (<http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?>)

blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftn5) The beads make their way through the water filtration systems and then eventually out into our open water sources.[6] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftn6) There “are no prospects” to get microbeads and plastics out of our water resources.[7] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftn7) Microbeads may be hard to detect, and there is no way to filter them, but fish are eating them.[8] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftn8) We drink this water and eat these fish, and these microplastics become part of our systems as well.[9] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftn9)

[1] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnf1) Lisa Maria Garza, Tiny Plastic Beads are Latest Pollution Threat to the Great Lakes, The Huffington Post, Jul. 30, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/30/tiny-plastic-beads-great-lakes-pollution_n_3680070.html.

[2] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnf2) Woods End Laboratories, Microbead plastic added to list of harmful water pollution, (Feb. 8, 2013) available at <http://woodend.org/2013/02/consumer-microbead-plastics-added-list-oceanlake-contaminants/>.

[3] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnf3) Editorial, Good For Your Face, Bad for the Fish: Facial soaps can contain plastic scrubbing beads that end up in the Great Lakes, Chicago Tribune, Aug. 11, 2013, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2013-08-11/opinion/ct-edtc-plastic-0811-jm-20130811_1-great-lakes-lakes-michigan-and-ontario-water-samples.

[4] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnf4) Anthony L. Andrady, Microplastics in the marine environment, Marine Pollution Bull. (Elsevier LTD) 2011, at 1600.

[5] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnf5) Press Release, The 5 Gyres Institute, The 5 Gyres Institute Sets Sail For First Ever Plastic Pollution Study Of Lake Michigan (Aug. 1, 2013) (on file with author).

[6] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnf6) Supra, note 3.

[7] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnf7) Margaret Badore, 3 companies commit to removing plastic beads from their products, trechugger, Jul. 2, 2013, <http://www.trechugger.com/clean-water/3-companies-commit-removing-plastic-beads-their-body-products.html>.

[8] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnf8) Supra, note 1.

[9] (http://www.blogger.com/blogger.g?blogID=8202935745006855383#_ftnf9) Supra, note 5.

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