

A New Source of Microplastics?

Microplastics are small pieces of plastics that are less than 5 mm in diameter and pollute the environment. They are distributed by air and water to be found in pristine and ecologically sensitive mountain communities. They are found in food, blood, and animal tissues. Microplastics are linked to various cancers, weakened immune systems, and reproductive issues. Today there are items of convenience being used once and discarded. One family of these items is pressure adhesives. Pressure adhesives include many brands of tape, postage stamps, self-sealing envelopes, labels on bottles and cans, and adhesive dots which are used in bulk-mail advertisements. This study is asking what the fate of these substances is once they are discarded. Are they a new source of microplastics? Do they contain water soluble chemicals? Can fluorescence microscopy be used to detect microparticles resulting from the breakdown of pressure adhesives?