

Black Plastic Is BAD News

IT'S RARELY RECYCLED & CAN CONTAIN TOXIC CHEMICALS

- Although black plastic makes up 15% of all plastic recyclables (largely single-use food containers), the vast majority is not recycled because the infrared technology used by recycling facilities cannot "see" black.
- As a result, most black plastic items end up in our landfills, incinerators, oceans and rivers after just a single use.
- Due to the lack of recycled black plastic, the demand is often met with e-waste (discarded electronics like old computers, phones, TVs, monitors and appliances) that contains toxic chemicals such as phthalates, flame retardants, and heavy metals such as cadmium, lead, nickel, chromium, and mercury.
- These chemical-laced plastics are melted down, mixed with other plastics and used to make recycled black plastic used in toys, utensils, coffee stirrers, mugs, jewelry, and holiday decorations.
- Although safety regulations limit the amounts of these chemicals in electronics, there are currently NO government regulations covering the safety of recycled black plastic items. A dangerous concentration of toxic chemicals that is prohibited in a laptop is perfectly acceptable in a black plastic fork, spatula, slotted spoon, or hot cup lid.
- A 2018 study found toxic chemicals present at up to 30 times the levels considered safe in a shocking 40% of the black plastic toys, thermoses, cocktail stirrers, and utensils tested.
- Even at very low levels, these toxic chemicals can cause serious reproductive and developmental problems, poisoning the brain and kidneys, disrupting human thyroid function, affecting development, and causing long-term neurological damage.
- Items of the greatest concern include black plastic cooking utensils, stirrers, food containers, and hot cup lids, as exposure to heat increases the likelihood of toxic chemicals leaching into food and drink.