

An invisible enemy threatens our oceans: **microplastics!**

Microplastics are **fibres, beads** and **plastic debris with a diameter smaller than 5 millimeters**. Once in the water, microplastic persists for a very long time, making their way into the rivers, lakes and oceans. **Acting as toxic sponges, they attract chemicals which can be harmful to fish when swallowed and they go on to contaminate the whole food chain.**





Laundry detergents in the ocean

A 2019 study of Ocean Wise states that about **878 tons of plastic microfibers** detaching from laundry are rejected each year in wastewater treatment facilities in Canada and the United States.



Plastic microbeads in cosmetics?

Thankfully, plastic microbeads in exfoliating and cleaning products have been banned in 2018 in Canada.

WHAT CAN CITIZENS DO TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF MICROPLASTICS IN WATER?

-  **Wash clothes less often:** This reduces the amount of microfibers released in water and allows clothing to wear out less quickly.
-  **Steer clear of fast fashion:** The fibers used in fast fashion are often of lesser quality and generate more microfibers.
-  **Use cold water while doing laundry:** Heat damages fibers and generates more microfibers.
-  **Choose natural fibers:** They don't generate microfibers.

SOME HELPFUL TECHNOLOGIES

-  In **France**, all new washing machines sold will need to be equipped with a microplastic filter by 2025.
-  There is a lot of ongoing research around the globe regarding better wastewater treatment to fight microplastic. For instance, some of the studies are looking into using aluminum chlorohydrate in wastewater treatment.

