

Fact bite #39



Polyethylene terephthalate (PET)

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PET is a type of transparent, lightweight, rigid plastic. It's commonly used for drinking bottles, food containers, or synthetic fibres made into clothing. An estimated 500 billion PET bottles are produced each year globally.

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PET is known for its established recycling processes, especially for drinking bottles. However, it is a non-permanent material meaning it cannot be recycled infinitely using current technology. The polymer chains break down and require the addition of virgin polymer.

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According to the FCCmigex database, more than 1'500 chemicals have been found in or migrating from PET food contact articles, including antimony, various phthalates, lead, and oligomers. For a lot of these chemicals, there is no data to ensure their safety. Scientists have proposed the development of new testing approaches using bioassays to ensure final food contact products are safe before entering the market.

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