

Fact bite #42



Polylactic acid (PLA)



1/4
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Polylactic acid (PLA) is a bioplastic material made from renewable resources such as corn or sugar cane, and is commonly used in food contact articles like cups, single-use cutlery, or takeout boxes.

2/4
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While PLA is often marketed as biodegradable, that doesn't mean it will easily degrade when it ends up in the environment. PLA degrades only in industrial composting conditions, where ideal temperatures, pH, and other requirements are provided.

3/4
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Bioplastics are not necessarily less chemically complex or safer than conventional fossil-based plastics. Studies have found similarly high baseline toxicity for PLA as for conventional plastic materials.

4/4