

### Topics

1. Basic facts about plastic!
2. How can we improve our daily habits of plastic use?
3. Recycling options?

### Some basic facts

- many different plastics
- they are soft and easy to turn into many different forms during manufacture
- Plastics are (mostly) synthetic (human-made) materials, made from **polymers**, which are long molecules built around chains of carbon atoms typically with hydrogen, oxygen, sulfur, and nitrogen filling in the spaces.

### Reduce plastic use in your daily life

1. Stop using plastic straws, even in restaurants. If a straw is a must, purchase a reusable stainless steel or glass straw
2. Use a reusable produce bag. A single plastic bag can take 1,000 years to degrade. Purchase or make your own reusable produce bag and be sure to wash them often!
3. Give up gum. Gum is made of a synthetic rubber, aka plastic.
4. Buy boxes instead of bottles. Often, products like laundry detergent come in cardboard which is more easily recycled than plastic.
5. Purchase food, like cereal, pasta, and rice from bulk bins and fill a reusable bag or container. You save money and unnecessary packaging.
6. Reuse containers for storing leftovers or shopping in bulk.
7. Use a reusable bottle or mug for your beverages, even when ordering from a to-go shop

### Recycling options

- mechanical recycling ("chop and wash"), where the plastic is washed, ground into powders and melted
- chemical recycling, where the plastic is broken down into basic components. Before recycling, most plastics are sorted according to their resin type