Lidl GB
Microplastics Policy

January 2021

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1. Our Position

Our Understanding of Microplastics

There is currently no uniform definition for the term 'microplastic'. As a rule, it is understood to mean 'a solid plastic particle that is smaller than five millimeters', for which the term "microbead" is often used.

However, under British legislation[1], a microbead is defined as a solid plastic particle that is:

- not water soluble; and
- less than or equal to 5mm in any dimension.

Plastic is defined as a synthetic polymer that:

- can be moulded, extruded or physically manipulated into different shapes; and
- retains its final manufactured shape when used for the purpose for which it was manufactured.

Microplastics can be distinguished into primary and secondary microplastics. Primary microplastics are industrially manufactured plastic particles that are intentionally added to a specific product. These include, for example, the tiny pieces of plastic added to products such as face scrubs, soaps, toothpaste and shower gels. Secondary microplastics, on the other hand, arise when larger plastics decay and decompose. For example, when plastic waste such as packaging, bags or bottles, break down into smaller plastic parts. The decomposition of plastic into secondary microplastics is understood to be the main contributor of microplastics into the marine environment.

This policy focuses specifically on the steps that Lidl is taking to address the negative environmental impact of primary microplastics. Further information on our approach to plastics can be found *here*.

Environmental Impact

We are acutely aware of the important role that plastic plays in modern day society – protecting food, keeping it safe and minimising food waste. Equally, we have long been committed to tackling the important issue of plastic waste, and the detrimental impact that it is having on the environment, especially our oceans. Plastic is typically non-biodegradable and, when used unsustainably, can remain in the environment for many years. It is mostly produced using crude oil, which is an increasingly scarce raw material. Oil production causes considerable ecological issues through the contamination of soils and water sources, air pollution, fragmentation of habitats or deforestation.

In addition to the risks associated with the production of microplastics, there are also problems connected to their end-of-life disposal and subsequent entry into the natural environment. Primary microplastics, such as those used in rinse-off personal care products (e.g. face scrubs, soaps, toothpaste and shower gels), enter into waterways and oceans, causing serious harm to marine life.

In the sea, microplastics can damage the digestive tracts of marine animals, hinder digestion and block food intake. In addition, microplastics can carry pollutants, invasive species and pathogens, enabling them to accumulate.

Microplastics can also enter the environment through sewage sludge from sewage treatment plants, which is often applied to fields as a nutrient-rich fertilizer. These particles can be ingested by animals or washed out into water. The remains of plastic that have been thrown away can even be found in the air.

In summary, microplastics can be found in water, on land and in the air. In addition to this, microplastics have also been found in foods such as mussels, fish, honey, and beer, as well as in drinking water. The exact human toxicological dangers that arise from the consumption of microplastics are currently the subject of various scientific studies.

Our Approach

In June 2018, the Microbeads Ban came into force in Great Britain[1]. The regulation prohibits the use of microbeads as an ingredient in the manufacture of rinse-off personal care products and the sale of any such products containing microbeads.

At Lidl GB we are fully compliant with the Act, having removed microbeads from our personal care products ahead of this timeline in 2017.

In addition to this, we have committed to going beyond national legislation and are working towards avoiding microplastics in all own-brand cosmetics sold in our stores. This forms part of the Schwarz Group's (the international group that includes Lidl and Kaufland retail divisions) international plastic strategy "REset Plastic", which contains five focus areas: avoidance, design, recycling, disposal, and innovation and education.

By 2021, we are committed to avoiding the use of microplastics in the formulations of our own-brand cosmetics products*

This currently includes the following microbeads: polyamide (PA), polyethylene (PE), polyethylene terephthalate (PET), polyester (PES), polyimide (PI), polypropylene (PP), polyurethane (PUR).

As well as the following: other, non-biodegradable, synthetic polymers ** that are solid, dispersed, gel-like, dissolved or liquid in our definition. These include polyacrylates (e.g. acrylate copolymers, acrylate crosspolymers, polyacrylates, carbomer, polymethyl methacrylate, polyacrylamides), polyquaternium, polystyrene, silicones (e.g. methicone, dimethiconol, other siloxanes and silanes), PEG> 35, PPG> 50, Polyvinyls (eg polyvinylpyrrolidone (PVP)), polylactic acid (PLA), ethylene-vinyl acetate copolymers.

* Providing that the removal of synthetic polymers does not result in any significant restriction in product performance and / or safety

** Synthetic polymers are linked from monomeric basic building blocks through chemical reactions to form polymeric macromolecules. This should be distinguished from semi-synthetic polymers that are based on natural polymers such as cellulose and are chemically modified.

2. Our Scope

This policy relates to all own brand cosmetics and personal care sold by Lidl GB.

3. Our Actions

In September 2017, Lidl GB removed all personal care products containing microbeads from its rinse-off personal care product range.

Solid microplastics made from polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP), polyethylene terephthalate (PET), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polyamide (PA), polystyrene (PS) and polyurethane (PU) have largely been removed rom all Lidl cosmetic products. For example, polyethylene (PE) and polypropylene (PP) microplastics have been replaced by pumice stone particles (perlite) in shower peelings or by bamboo particles (Bambusa Arundinacea Stem Powder) in wash peelings.

In close collaboration with our suppliers, we are working hard to find suitable replacements for 'other' synthetic polymers. These include, for example, polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) and polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE), which are still contained in product formulations for texturing substances, and styrene / acrylates copolymers. These are used in numerous products as opacifiers. However, alternative substances must first be analysed and evaluated for various complex factors such as safety, environmental compatibility, effectiveness and technological applicability before being implemented in our product ranges.

Our suppliers are contractually obliged to adhere to the requirements for microplastics.

We are committed to communicating progress against the goals outline in this policy both online and within our CSR reports, which can be can be accessed *here*.

4. Sources

[1] The Environmental Protection (Microbeads) (England) Regulations 2017

Available at: *https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/9780111162118*