

## Microplastics are everywhere, even in the Arctic snow

**Microplastics** are some of the Earth's tiniest and most **insidious** enemies. These tiny bits of plastic are found in countless consumer products including cosmetics, tires, cigarettes and toothpaste, and when they collect in bodies of water and other natural areas, they can pose serious environmental **hazards** and health risks.

microplastics 塑料微粒

insidious 隐伏的; 潜伏

hazard 危险; 冒险

In fact, a new study reveals that microplastics have even polluted **Alpine** snow and Arctic ice. How did the microplastics get there? The study, published this week in the journal Science Advances, posits that the tiny **particles** become airborne and, when swept up into the Earth's atmosphere, can be transported virtually around the globe.

alpine 阿尔卑斯山的; 高山的

particle 颗粒; 质点

"The large concentrations of MPs and microfibers in snow highlight the importance of the atmosphere as a source of airborne MPs and microfibers," the study reads. "Through this pathway, MPs likely find their way into soil and **aquatic** environments and therefore also into food chains."

aquatic 水生的

pristine 干净的; 原始的

In other words, if microplastics are found in **pristine** Arctic ice, they're probably being breathed in, lived in and eaten by animals in other ecosystems.

If microplastics are being **swirled** around the atmosphere, the study says, we're breathing them in, as well. And that could have serious health consequences.

"The high MP concentrations detected in snow samples from **continental Europe** to the Arctic indicate significant air pollution and stress the urgent need for research on human and animal health effects focusing on airborne MPs," the study says.

swirl 漩涡; 盘绕

continental 大陆的