

Prolific ID

What is your Prolific ID? Please note that this response should auto-fill with the correct ID

Consent Form

About this study:

This survey is part of a study to explore consumer beliefs about microplastics. As part of this, we are surveying a sample of the UK population.

- The researchers who are conducting this study are based at the Universities of Bath and Kent.
- The survey should take no more than 15 minutes of your time.
- There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Please remember that your honest opinion is the most valuable to us.
- The data will be held on a password-protected computer file.
- Your identity and those of other participants will be anonymous.
- If you agree to take part in this survey but feel at any stage that you would like to stop, you are free to do so at any time, and your data will be deleted.
- If, after the survey has taken place, you decide you do not want your responses used in the study, you are free to do so, and your data will be deleted.

If you have any questions about this study, feel free to contact us:

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I agree to take part in this survey under the conditions explained to me above:

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Section 1

Please answer the following questions. Your data will be held securely and only used for research purposes. We are asking these questions to understand the survey responses better. Your honest answer is of great value.

How would you describe your gender?

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary / third gender
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Please specify your current age:

- ☐ 18 - 29
- ☐ 30 - 39
- ☐ 40 - 49
- ☐ 50 - 59
- ☐ 60 - 69
- ☐ 70+

Please enter your postcode:

To which of these ethnic groups do you belong?

- ☐ White - any white background.
- ☐ Mixed - any mixed background.
- ☐ Asian/Asian British
- ☐ Black/Black British
- ☐ Any other ethnic group

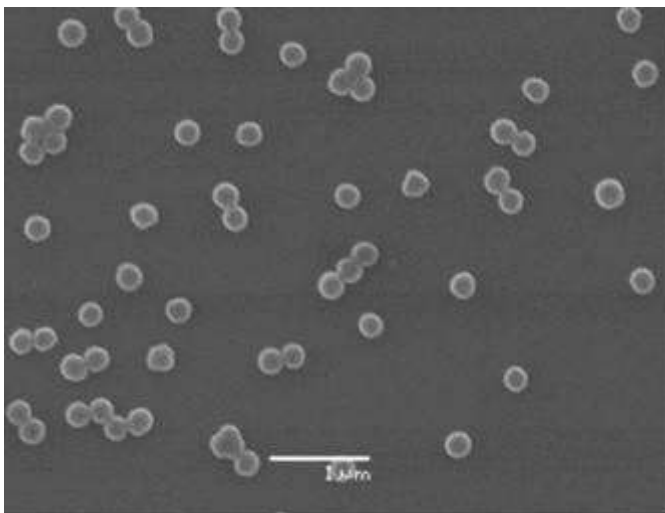
Please indicate your knowledge of microplastics and their effects on the environment and human health?

No Knowledge	Little	Average	Good	Strong
1	2	3	4	5
:				

Please read the following details about microplastics:

- Microplastics are small plastic particles, up to 5 mm in diameter. Microplastics are some of the most commonly found types of plastic in the environment. The majority of microplastics in the environment come from larger plastics, such as packaging, that have broken down.
- Some microplastics in the marine environment come from products, such as detergents and cosmetics, that after use, are washed via sewage to the sea. Not all microplastics will reach the sea as some sewage sludge is applied as fertiliser.
- Microplastics released to the marine environment cannot realistically be removed and may persist there for many thousands of years.
- A small amount of microplastics has been found in water and seafood, which is consumed by humans and animals. Although it is not currently possible to determine the long-term impact of exposure on the environment and human and animal health, the potential for adverse effects is a cause of concern.
- *The survey results will be useful for informing future microplastic policies so we would like you to please answer all questions as realistically and accurately as you can.*

For context, microplastics are usually only visible under the microscope. See this picture for an example.



What do you think science will tell us about the effects of microplastics on human health in ten years compared to now if there are no changes in current regulations?

Please indicate on the following scale:

Microplastics are much less harmful than we currently think.

Microplastics are as harmful as we currently believe.

Microplastics are much more harmful than we currently know.

Microplastics are much less harmful than we currently think.

Microplastics are as harmful as we currently believe.

Microplastics are much more harmful than we currently know.

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3 4 5

How confident are you in this prediction?

- ☐ Exactly
- ☐ Plus or minus 1 point on the scale.
- ☐ Plus or minus 3 points on the scale.
- ☐ Not at all.

CV

- Suppose that the UK introduces a policy to upgrade wastewater treatment plant filtering systems to capture all the microplastics in sewage wastewater.
- The policy would prevent the number of microplastics in the marine environment from increasing beyond today's level.
- This would avoid the potential future harmful effects of microplastics on the environment and human and animal health.
- An increase in your water bills would be used to pay for the cost of this investment.

Would your household be willing to pay £\$ $\{e://Field/BID\}$ per year in extra water bills for ten years to implement this policy?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please indicate which, if any, of the statements listed below most closely match your reasons for these choices (please select one option):

- ☐ I could not afford it.
- ☐ I pay enough already.

- ☐ It is not worthwhile trying to limit the release of microplastics.
- ☐ It is the Governments'/Water companies' responsibility.
- ☐ Insufficient information provided
- ☐ Other: Please specify

Choice Experiment Information

- Although microplastics come from many sources, we are interested in a policy that would deal with the production of laundry detergents specifically as they are commonly used by consumers. Other policies exist for other sources of microplastics.
- Microplastics are added to many detergents such as fabric softeners, dishwashing liquid, and laundry detergents both pods and powders. For context, most laundry detergent pods look like the below picture.
- We are interested in your preferences for laundry detergents. A rough average product price is around £10.



This section uses a different question format where you will be presented two options; A and B, which are described in terms of 3 characteristics:

- Product Performance:
 - How effective detergents are with and without microplastics.
 - Without microplastics, detergents would work less effectively or not smell as nice.
 - The values presented are the estimated change in effectiveness between 0% change (no change) and 90% (significant change).
- Release:
 - How many microplastics from detergents are annually released to the environment.
 - Approximately 500 tons of microplastics from detergents are estimated to be

released to the environment annually from the UK.

-- The values presented are the percentage reduction (%) in the tonnage of microplastics coming from detergents that may end up in the environment.

• Price:

-- How costly detergents are with and without microplastics.

-- Without microplastics, producers must find alternative, more expensive substitutes.

-- The values presented are the estimated increase in the price (£) of laundry detergents if more expensive substitutes are used.

These characteristics will take different values for each option. We then ask you to carefully select which option you prefer – there is no right or wrong answer.

You will be given a table and then you will be asked which option you prefer:

Which option do you prefer?

Please select one

	A	B
Reduction in the performance of the detergents.	0%	50%
Percentage reduction in the release of microplastics from detergents.	0%	10%
Increase in product price.	£0	£1

☐ Option A
☐ Option B

Option A represents current real levels.

- No change in price or quality.
- Possibility of environmental and health effects.

Option B represents a proposed level.

- The Government would ban microplastics from being added to laundry detergent products.
- Products would be of lower quality and would be more expensive
- There would be lower environmental and health impacts, although the existence and extent of these effects is uncertain in any case.

We are interested in which situation you prefer.

Do you prefer option A or B? e://Field/BlockA

☐ Option A

☐ Option B

Do you prefer option A or B? e://Field/BlockB

- ☐ Option A
- ☐ Option B

Do you prefer option A or B?\${e://Field/BlockC}

- ☐ Option A
- ☐ Option B

Do you prefer option A or B?\${e://Field/BlockD}

- ☐ Option A
- ☐ Option B

Attitudinal Scales

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements on a sliding scale of 1-5, thank you.

		No threat	Significant threat		
	1	2	3	4	5
"Microplastic pollution <i>currently</i> presents a threat to <i>myself</i> ."					<input type="text"/>
"Microplastic pollution <i>currently</i> presents a threat to the <i>environment</i> ."					<input type="text"/>
"Microplastic pollution will <i>in the future (up to year 2032)</i> present a threat to <i>myself</i> ."					<input type="text"/>

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements on a sliding scale of 1-5, thank you.

	Less Concerned	Unchanged	More Concerned		
	1	2	3	4	5

Less Concerned

Unchanged

More Concerned

1

2

3

4

5

"The pandemic has
changed my
thoughts on
conserving the
environment".

"The pandemic has
changed my
thoughts on
microplastics."

Block 7

Did you ever have the coronavirus?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Have you ever donated to or been a member of a charity/group dedicated to the environment?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you think the results of this survey will matter to how regulators change their policies ?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please select your highest level of education you have completed (pick the option which most closely describes you).

- ☐ No qualifications.
- ☐ 1 - 4 Levels / CSEs / GCSEs, NVQ Level 1.
- ☐ 5 + O Levels / CSEs / GCSEs, NVQ Level 2, AS Levels, Higher Diploma, Diploma Apprenticeship.
- ☐ 2 + A Levels, NVQ Level 3, BTEC National Diploma.
- ☐ Degree, Higher Degree, NVQ level 4-5, BTEC Higher Level, professional qualifications (e.g. teaching, nursing, accountancy).

- ☐ Other qualifications (vocational/work related, foreign qualifications or level unknown).

Please indicate your households approximate average monthly income before tax?

- ☐ £0 - £500
- ☐ £501 - £1000
- ☐ £1001- £1500
- ☐ £1501 - £2000
- ☐ £2001 - £2500
- ☐ £2501 - £3000
- ☐ £3001 - £4000
- ☐ £4001 - £5000
- ☐ £5001+
- ☐ Prefer not to say

On a scale of 1-10, how clear was this survey to complete?

Did Not Understand Perfectly Clear

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This is the pilot version of the survey so please leave comments here on how we can improve this survey:

Block 8

That's all! Thank you for your time!

Your responses will remain confidential, but the results of this survey will be made publicly available. The results of this survey will be instructive in developing future government programs to reduce the risks and severity of ingestion of microplastics. Your participation in this survey is critical to its success.

For updates, withdrawals, questions and comments:

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