



**HEAL**  
HEALTH AND  
ENVIRONMENT  
ALLIANCE

# SPOTLIGHT ON OUR HISTORICAL PLASTIC BURDEN

A recent attempt to summarize the production and use of all plastics in the last 70 years has estimated that:

- Virgin plastics production from 1950 to 2015 reached 8.3 billion metric tonnes—roughly the mass of a medium-sized comet.
- Only 30% of all plastics ever produced is still in use.
- As of 2015, of more than 6 billion tonnes of plastics waste produced, 79% ended up in landfills or our environment; 12% was incinerated; and only 9% was recycled.
- Plastics in landfills outlive human lives by far—it takes 400 to 1,000 years for plastic to degrade.
- By 2050, 12 billion metric tonnes of plastics are expected to end up in landfills or the natural environment.

1. R. Geyer, J. R. Jambeck, and K. L. Law, "Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made," *Sci. Adv.*, vol. 3, no. 7, p. e1700782, Jul. 2017, doi: 10.1126/sciadv.1700782.



**VISIT HEAL'S REPORT 'TURNING THE PLASTIC TIDE: THE CHEMICALS IN PLASTIC THAT PUT OUR HEALTH AT RISK' FOR MORE INFORMATION**



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