Current Updates on Plastic Pollution

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The pollution of plastic has taken a great toll on both our bodies and in our environments near home. The EPA has found that it takes 100-1000 years for plastic to be fully decomposed or degradable into our earth. The only problem is that we use more plastic than ever before and we have now had to put them in landfills, shred them in factories, as well as accidentally forgetting about them at our beaches or water sources, which result in trash islands or ocean pollution. Microplastics have made their way into our organs, and we now have people being born with microplastics in their developing bodies while also making their way into our sperm and breastmilk. Even the food webs in our oceans have become severely saturated with microplastics that many species such as sea turtles, dolphins, and whales have been found with plastic inside their stomachs. Ingesting plastic has led to death in both animals and humans, while also causing diseases to spread faster into the human body.

Despite these scary details, many scientists are working on which recycling method works for nonbiodegradable plastic waste in our oceans and how they can apply to other regions of the world (Zhang et al., 2021). They will continue to work on finding new ways to recycle plastic waste with methods that will result in less harmful impacts on the ecosystems that we share with homes with. But you can play a role too by supporting your local refillery with their mission of helping recycle and reduce plastic waste in this country by switching to more sustainable methods of refilling and reusing.

References

Environmental Protection Agency. (2024, April 23). EPA. https://www.epa.gov/plastics/impacts-plastic-pollution

Zhang, F., Zhao, Y., Wang, D., Yan, M., Zhang, J., Zhang, P., ... & Chen, C. (2021). Current technologies for plastic waste treatment: A review. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, *282*, 124523.