

# While you are cleaning the house for Passover, you can also keep Pharmaceuticals, Personal Care Products and Plastic Microbeads out of our water!



When we think of “water pollution,” we often think of industrial waste, raw sewage, and large pieces of garbage like tires and appliances. **HOWEVER**, our aquatic ecosystems and possibly our drinking water are threatened by a *new form of pollution*: PPCPs and Microbeads!

- **WHAT ARE PPCPs?** Pharmaceuticals and Personal Care Products are substances we use every day --- like antibiotics, vitamins, and hormonal supplements. They also include cosmetics, fragrances, detergents, body washes, etc. **WHAT THESE SUBSTANCES HAVE IN COMMON** is *their bio-activity*, namely their effect on living tissue.
- **WHAT ARE MICROBEADS?** They are generally used as scrubbing agents or exfoliants in personal care products. Once body-washes containing microbeads are rinsed off a person’s body, they go down the drain, escape sewage treatment, and go directly into the environment.
- **PPCPs and Microbeads find their way into the environment in a number of ways:**
  1. Excreted as waste because they’re not fully metabolized
  2. Flushed down the toilet by people thinking they are properly disposing of unwanted/old medicines
  3. As discharged waste water from sewage treatment plants
- **Why we don’t want PPCPs in our water:**
  1. They are endocrine disruptors that cause an intersex condition in fish.
  2. They alter gender distribution in fish populations.
  3. There is a potential human-risk factor.
- **Why we don’t want plastic Microbeads in the environment:**
  1. These beads can absorb toxins that once ingested by fish can spread up the food chain.
  2. Microbeads can get stuck in the stomachs of aquatic organisms or deprive them of nutrients supplied by food.

**\*\*\*There are things that you can do today to protect NYC and Long Island’s aquatic ecosystems! Please read the other side of this fact sheet (printed on two sides to be more green!).**

**Making a difference in the world is as easy as buying white toothpaste rather than the one with blue stripes and sparkles.**

**To reduce the volume of PPCPs in the environment, reduce the amount of PPCPs and other chemicals you need to throw away:**

- Partner with your doctor to avoid accumulating medication.
- Dispose of old or unwanted medication and chemical products properly.
- DO NOT EVER flush them down the toilet.
- Take unwanted/expired meds and other chemical products to local “drop-off” events. (In addition to medications and cosmetics, many places will accept automotive products such as motor oil, transmission fluid, and spent batteries, thermometers, syringes (clearly labeled and packaged in a “sharps” container or other leak proof, puncture-resistant container), electronics, and household products such as pesticides, paint, hazardous cleaners, and spent compact fluorescent light bulbs.) You can search “NYC drop off sites for old medication” to find the latest information about sites.
- See if your local pharmacy accepts unwanted or unused medicines. Many already do - or you can be the person who asks them to do it. (We know that CVS has a “TakeAway Environmental Return System” where you get an envelope at a CVS, with instructions about how to return it.)

**To Keep Microbeads out of our water:**

- Refrain from purchasing products with microbeads in them. ***How do you know if your product has microbeads in it?***
  - a. If you see little specks/rounded balls (often blue or red colored) in lotions that claim to “exfoliate”
  - b. Some brands have “...enriched with microbeads” on it.
  - c. You can refer to the site <http://www.beatthemicrobead.org/en/> for a list of products containing microbeads.
- Avoid products with “polyethylene” or “polypropylene” in the ingredients. Buy cosmetics and body washes with less harmful materials. There are cheap alternatives.

**Don’t be afraid to read the ingredients in products that you buy.**

**IF YOU HAVE OLD MEDICATIONS TO DISPOSE OF, AND CANNOT GET OUT TO A DROP OFF CENTER, THE GREEN TEAM OF THE HOLLIS HILLS JEWISH CENTER WOULD BE HAPPY TO PICK YOUR ITEMS UP FROM YOUR HOME. PLEASE CALL MARIS BLECHNER, 917-941-8640, AND WE WILL MAKE AN APPOINTMENT.**