



PLASTIC SOUP

Date: 28 May 2020

Subject: No more (micro)plastics in cosmetics!

Sir, Madam,

We want to inform you about the latest update of the Beat the Microbead app. Based on years of campaigning and knowledge building, we are finally introducing an app that quickly scans the ingredients listed on cosmetics and personal care products by using machine learning technology. Our primary goal is to inform consumers about plastics that are **intentionally added** to personal care products, based on the latest scientific knowledge available. By doing so, consumers from all over the world can decide for themselves if they still want to purchase products with microplastics, or if they would rather choose a microplastic-free product instead.

Let us be clear: our first concern is the environment and human health as you can read in this [position paper](#) we consider all microplastics to pose a risk to our health and environment.

Twelve years after REACH came into force, there is still limited public information available on the environmental and human health risks of synthetic polymers. Considering the enormous and ever-increasing number of synthetic polymers that are in circulation and to which people and the environment are exposed on a daily basis, we believe it is crucial that more transparency and knowledge about their risks is publicly shared. Public disclosure of this information is still lacking. That is why we call upon you again, to make this information publicly accessible.

What is new in the Beat the Microbead app? It still assesses products following a traffic light rating system: **Red**, **Orange**, and **Green**, but the list of detectable microplastics is now much longer.

RED Products that are assessed to be in this colour category contain microplastics. Our [list of microplastics](#) is derived from the research conducted by [UNEP](#), [Tauw](#), and [ECHA](#) (see ANNEX to the ANNEX XV RESTRICTION REPORT, PROPOSAL FOR A RESTRICTION, Annex F. Appendix D1 table 88) and contains over 500 synthetic polymers.



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ORANGE Products that are assessed to be in this colour category contain what we call “sceptical” microplastics. These include, but are not limited to, Polyquaternium, Polysorbate, PEGs, and PPGs. By “sceptical microplastic” ingredients, we mean synthetic polymers for which there is not enough information available concerning their risks. We will keep adding suspicious substances to this list and will remove the ones which are proven not to pose a risk to the environment and/or human health.

GREEN Products that are assessed to be in this category do not contain any known or “sceptical” microplastics.

ZERO Brands on this list have their entire range of products free of all known microplastic ingredients.



We call upon the cosmetics industry, of which you are part of, to prove once and for all that your products are microplastics free.

It goes without saying that we are willing to cooperate with producers and industrial companies within the cosmetics sector, and we do so regularly. We ask brands & producers the following:

- Inform us if you have removed microbeads and/or microplastics from your product formulas. In that case, we will update the Beat the Microbead database.
- If you think that a specific product has been incorrectly listed or classified, please send us proof that this product contains ingredients that are not posing risks to our health and the environment. When proven, we will remove the product in question directly from our red and/or orange list.

We consider the research by UNEP, TAUW, and ECHA to be the best-substantiated overview currently available of the different microplastics that can occur in cosmetics and personal care products. As afore mentioned, our goal is to provide the consumer with transparent and clear information on products that contain these intentionally added microplastics.

We are, of course, willing to discuss with you further about this.

Regards,

Maria Westerbos
Director & Founder

Jeroen Dagevos
Head of Programs

PLASTIC SOUP FOUNDATION
SUMATRAKADE 1537
1019 RS AMSTERDAM

+31 (0)20 211 13 48
INFO@PLASTICSOUPFOUNDATION.ORG
WWW.PLASTICSOUPFOUNDATION.ORG

KVK 5207 2894
BANK TRIODOS
IBAN NL13TRIO0198047517
BIC TRIONL2U



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With support of:



PLASTIC SOUP FOUNDATION
SUMATRAKADE 1537
1019 RS AMSTERDAM

+31 (0)20 211 13 48
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BIC TRIONL2U