

# HOW MICROFIBERS ENTER OUR ENVIRONMENTS

Clothing sheds tiny pieces of fiber, called microfibers or fiber fragments. Microfibers are one of the biggest sources of microplastic pollution in our environments. Researchers have found microfibers in air, water, soil, food, and humans.



Friction from wearing and drying clothes releases microfibers into the air.



Humans inhale and ingest microfibers.

Negative health effects are being investigated.



Microfibers shed into laundry wastewater.



Rain washes microfibers from land and air into waterways.



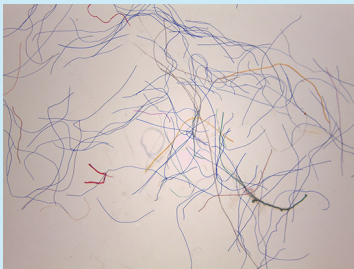
Synthetic fibers like polyester, nylon, spandex, and acrylic, last a long time in the environment.

Chemicals are used in the production of clothing, which can be released into the environment after extended exposure.

Wastewater treatment systems traps most microfibers in sludge, but some microfibers leak into waterways.

Sludge can be used as fertilizer, introducing microfibers into soil.

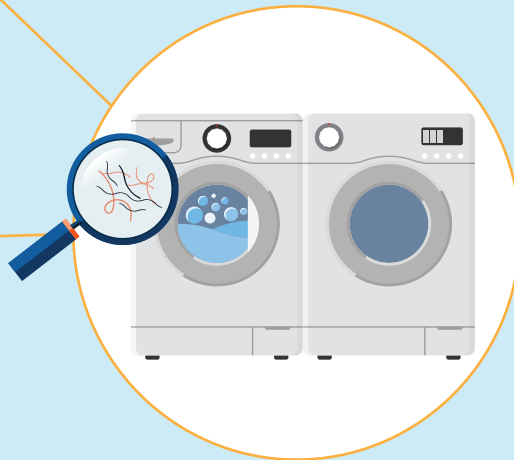
# HOW YOU CAN REDUCE MICROFIBER POLLUTION



Microfibers under a microscope.  
Image credit: Sherri Mason



Microfibers next to grain of rice.  
Image credit: Rozalia Project



Researchers led by Columbia University are developing advanced laundry filtration technology to capture fibers before they pollute our environment.



Reduce microfiber pollution by washing your clothes less.



Keep your clothes looking newer for longer by washing in cold water and air drying. This will reduce your need to buy more clothes.



Check clothing tags, and consider avoiding clothing with synthetic fibers like polyester, acrylic, and nylon.



Washing machine microfiber filters are being developed. Some are available for purchase, including built-in, retrofit, and washing bag and ball options.

## For additional information:

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