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Are We Eating Plastics?

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Plastics in Food

The use of plastics is indeed helpful for everyone. It is convenient for shoppers and other industries that require plastic packaging. Unfortunately, the utilisation has now influenced the safety of our daily food [1]. Recently the discovery of microplastics and nanoplastics in food has garnered the attention of various sectors. Micro-/Nano-plastics are defined as the tiny size of plastic particles less than 5 mm [2]. The study begins with plastic particle pollution in the environment, such as water and sediments [3]. However, the study extends to edible aquatic animals, canned foods, table salts and vegetables. It can also be found in bottled water and other food commodities [4]. Yes, the researchers found plastic in our daily food! The question now, are we overconsuming it?

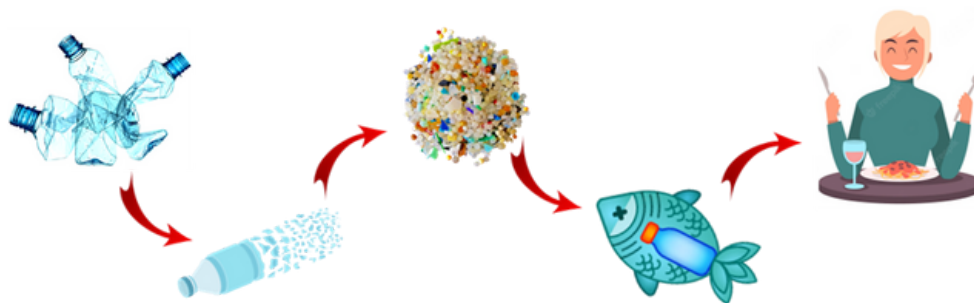


Figure 1: The possible pathway of plastic consumed by human

Plastic Legacy

When the plastics end up in the environment, they will break into smaller particles. For aquatic animals, some plastic particles resemble their prey's colour, and most microplastics release an odour that probably attracts their appetite [5]. It shows how microplastics entered our food chain through ingestion from one animal to another and humans at its top (Figure 1). Worth knowing that this tiny particle can sorb various environmental contaminants such as metals and other toxic chemicals [6]. The worst scenario could happen when the sorbed contaminants can be transferred into the human body and affect our health. However, the impacts of these tiny plastic particles on humans are still limited and warrant insight investigations [7]. Some studies have used animal models to investigate the effects of microplastics/nanoplastics, which reveals poor results on their physiology and behavioural abnormalities.

The World with Plastics Land

The utilisation of plastics has skyrocketed in the last decade. It is difficult to stop its usage, although the government have made strenuous efforts in the single-use plastic ban campaign. Ultimately it depends on our self-awareness, whether to keep using it and continue eating plastics or lessen its usage to make the world more green and healthy where we can consume clean and safe foods. Yes, without plastics in our daily foods! It could be achieved by changing our mind and being part of the solution to reduce plastic pollution.

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