

# Change your own clothes purchasing and washing habits

At a national level the NFWI will be pushing for action to tackle the problem of the release of microplastic fibres at source, but we can all make a difference by taking action at home.

## **Wash well**

The EU Mermaids Project and Ocean Clean Wash have developed a range of actions that you can take to reduce the release of fibres from washing clothes.

### *Checklist:*

Wash less – Only wash clothes when they need it. Items that are not worn close to the skin often do not need washing after just one wear. This will also prolong the life of your clothes.

Fill up your washing machine to the max: washing a full load results in less friction between the clothes and, therefore, less fibres are released.

Use washing liquid instead of powder: the 'scrub' function of the grains of the powder result in loosening the fibres of clothes more than with liquid.

Wash at a low temperature: when clothes are washed at a high temperature some fabrics are damaged, leading to the release of fibres.

When cleaning the dryer, do not flush the lint down the drain, throw it in the bin.

Avoid long washing cycles: long periods of washing cause more friction between fabrics, which can result in more tearing of the fibres.

Avoid using detergents with a high ph and oxidising agents

## **Wear well – shop smarter and buy less**

*Before buying a new item of clothing ask yourself these questions:*

Do you love it? Be choosy, don't compromise for designs you don't really like just because they are in style.

Does it fit well?

Does it go with the rest of your wardrobe?

Is it well made? Avoid clothes that do not look like they will wear and wash well.





# Help us End Plastic Soup



## **What's the problem?**

Microplastic fibres are small plastic fragments 5mm or smaller that are shed from synthetic clothes when laundered and end up in the sea and wider environment. The scale of the problem is large; millions of people wash their clothes every week, shedding these tiny particles that are too small to be caught by the machine's filters, flowing into the sewage system and eventually into the ocean.

Due to their small size microplastic fibres are readily ingested by aquatic life, filling up their stomachs which can eventually cause death. We also know that the plastic fibres attract toxins and harmful chemical pollutants which then end up in the food we eat, the long-term effects of which are not yet clear.

## **How can you help?**

Raising awareness of the issue amongst your community is an important step to encourage people to take action and understand the impact microplastic fibres are having on the environment. Consumers can make a difference by altering clothes purchasing and washing habits - more information is on the other side of the leaflet.

For further ways to get involved with the campaign, such as sending a letter to your local MP, please visit: [thewi.org.uk/endplasticsoup](http://thewi.org.uk/endplasticsoup)

