

PETS vs PLASTICS

[Pets vs. Plastics](#) report from EarthDay.org uncovers just how deep microplastics are embedded in our pet companions' lives. Given that pets are increasingly part of our families it is not surprising that the report had such an impact.

Research has shown that the majority of pet owners regard their [relationship](#) with their pets, especially dogs and cats, as akin to a relationship with a child. [Millennials and Gen Z](#) have been touted as the “*fur-baby-boom generations*.”

On July 12, 2024 [Pets Vs. Plastics](#) exposed how plastic pollutants had infiltrated our pet's lives too – their food, toys and bedding. As the pet market continues to boom, by the end of 2025 Americans alone are projected to spend [\\$157 billion on pet related products](#), with the U.S. representing the world's largest market. This explosive growth means more plastic products are ending up in our homes, and ultimately, in our pets' daily routines and even inside their bodies.

Unfortunately, [Pets Vs. Plastics](#) found that pet toys are largely unregulated. Many pets are chewing and chomping on harmful plastic chemicals like, BPA (bisphenol A), polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and phthalates.

Plastic toys made with these types of products can potentially harm our pets because toxic chemicals leach out of these toys when they are chewed, licked, or played with. Once inside the body, BPA and the additives used to soften PVC can disrupt pets' hormone systems, damage organs like the liver and kidneys, and have been linked to reproductive problems and even cancer. Pets are especially vulnerable because they interact with toys using their mouths, increasing their exposure to these harmful substances.

It's not just the chemicals that can harm our pets—bits of plastic chewed off these toys can also be dangerous. In fact, a 2021 report in *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* found that [4%](#) of dogs required veterinary treatment after chewing on plastic toy materials, and 83% of pet owners give their pets essentially inedible chew toys. Yet, the *Pets Vs. Plastics* investigation revealed that a pet toy has never been recalled for being deemed “hazardous” by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), which claims its authority extends only to products intended for humans.

<https://www.earthday.org/paw-off-our-pets-the-one-year-anniversary-of-pets-vs-plastics/>