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**Microplastics found in human heart for first time – 14th August 2023**

## Level 4

Many of us know that plastic harms the environment. Fewer people know about the threat from the microplastics. Researchers have found microplastics in the human heart. Scientists in China collected tissue samples from heart surgery patients. There were tiny pieces of plastic in the tissue. They included a plastic commonly used in an alternative to glass, a polythene used in clothing and food containers, and a material used in building.

The scientists found thousands of microplastic pieces in the heart tissue. Chemicals from these are released into the body, which can lead to allergic reactions, cancer, and other problems. The average person consumes around 52,000 pieces a year. Microplastics make up 39 per cent of dust particles in our homes. They are almost impossible to remove from the body. It is critical to limit the amount of plastic we ingest.

## Level 5

Many of us are aware of the harm plastic does to the environment. Fewer people know about the threat from the microplastics. Scientists found them in our bodies more than a decade ago. Researchers have now found them in the human heart. Scientists in China collected tissue samples from patients undergoing heart surgery. They discovered tiny pieces of plastic from many sources. They included a plastic commonly used in an alternative to glass, a polythene used in clothing and food containers, and a substance used in construction.

The scientists found "thousands of individual microplastic pieces in most tissue samples". Chemicals from microplastics are released into the body, which can lead to allergic reactions, cancer, and cell death, among other problems. Scientists say the average person consumes around five grams of microplastics a week, or 52,000 pieces a year. Microplastics also make up 39 per cent of dust particles in our homes. Scientists say these are almost impossible to remove from the body. It is becoming critical to limit the amount of plastic we breathe in, ingest or swallow.

## Level 6

While many of us are aware of the environmental damage done by plastic, fewer people know about the threat from the ubiquity of microplastics. Scientists first found them in our bodies more than a decade ago. Worryingly, researchers have now found them in the human heart. Scientists at the Beijing Anzhen Hospital in China collected cardiac tissue samples from 15 patients undergoing heart surgery. After analyzing the samples, they discovered tiny pieces of plastic, from a multitude of sources. They included a plastic commonly used as a shatter-proof alternative to glass, a polythene widely used in clothing and food containers, and a polyvinyl chloride used in construction.

The scientists reported finding, "tens to thousands of individual microplastic pieces in most tissue samples". Chemicals from microplastics are released into the body, potentially leading to allergic reactions, cancer, cell death, and chronic inflammation, among other complications. Scientists reckon the average person consumes around five grams of microplastics a week, or 52,000 particles a year. Microplastics are so prevalent that they make up 39 per cent of dust particles in our homes. Scientists say these tiny shards are near-impossible to remove from the body. They say it is becoming critical to limit the amount of plastic we breathe in, ingest, swallow or absorb.