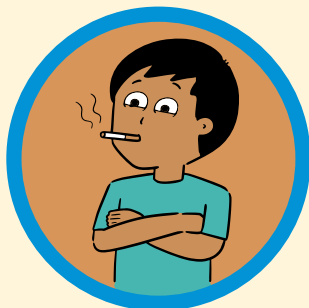


The Life Cycle of a Cigarette Butt

CIGARETTE IS SMOKED

After a person smokes a cigarette, two things remain in the environment: thirdhand smoke, a toxic chemical residue that sticks to surfaces, and cigarette butts. Cigarette butts contain over 7000 toxic chemicals and nearly all contain plastic filters.



1



DISPOSED

Most people who smoke throw their cigarette butts on the ground, generating about 4.5 trillion littered butts every year worldwide. Once on the ground, it can take anywhere from 18 months to 10 years for a cigarette butt to decompose.

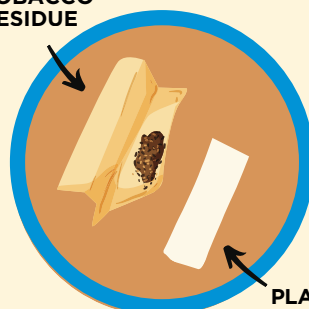


2

BREAKS DOWN

As cigarette butts decompose, the chemicals leak into the ground and the filters, made of cellulose acetate, a kind of plastic that looks like soft, spongy fibers, breakdown over time into tinier and tinier pieces of plastic, called microplastics.

PAPER+
TOBACCO
RESIDUE



3

PLASTIC
FILTER

TRANSPORTED

If not disposed of properly, cigarette butts can fall apart and decompose right where they were discarded, leaving behind microplastics and chemical pollutants, or they can be carried through storm drains by wind and rain into our waterways.

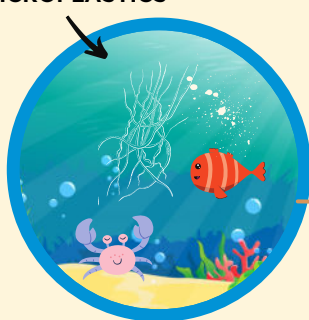


4

POLLUTES

Decomposing cigarette butts pollute the water where birds and marine life may mistake them for food, causing damage or even death. Even if it not mistaken for food, the microplastics and toxic chemicals leak into the water and harm marine life.

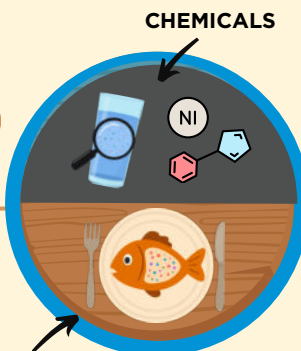
MICROPLASTICS



5

CONSUMED

Microplastics and toxic chemicals from cigarette butts can end up in our drinking water, meat, and fish. Animals can accumulate pollutants from cigarette butts in their bodies over time, which pass on to people who eat meat and fish.



6

CHEMICALS

MICROPLASTICS

ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMAN COSTS

Tobacco product waste pollutes our land and waterways, exposing humans and animals to toxic chemicals and microplastics. Clean-up is very costly to our cities and towns, and the long-term impacts on the environment are not well understood.



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