

# Moving away from plastics: The case of solid body wash

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For consumers trying to avoid plastics and go "green," solid body wash sold without packaging seems to be a good alternative to wrapped and bottled soaps. But as an article in *Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN)*, the weekly newsmagazine of the American Chemical Society, points out, it's complicated.

Senior Correspondent Carmen Drahl explains that governments and companies are responding to consumers who are swearing off plastics. In the U.S., plastic microbeads are banned from [personal care products](#), and it's common to run into shopping bag fees and restrictions on [plastic](#) utensils. And some companies are eschewing packaging altogether. One of the more unusual examples is solid, package-free body wash that manufacturers solidify with a common ingredient in [soap](#).

But determining whether solid body wash is really a more eco-friendly alternative to conventional soaps is not so easy. Because the products are relatively new, studies are still lacking. What is known is that neither conventional bottled body washes nor bar soaps are completely eco-friendly. Bottled liquid washes take about five times as much energy for formulation and about 20 times as much energy for packaging than bar soaps, according to one study. And the animal and plant fats used to make bar soaps can sometimes be traced back to resource-intensive agricultural practices. Experts suggest that consumers become more knowledgeable by visiting websites that provide information about ingredients that brands use, as well as packaging-reduction initiatives.

**More information:** "Solid body wash comes without packaging. But does that make it eco-friendly?," [cen.acs.org/environment/sustai ... comes-without/96/i20](https://cen.acs.org/environment/sustainable/comes-without/96/i20)

Provided by American Chemical Society

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