

Microplastics come from everywhere—yes, that includes sex toys

November 14 2023



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

As more research reveals how many microplastic particles humans are ingesting and absorbing in their bloodstreams, Duke and Appalachian State researchers led by Joana Sipe and Christine Hendren have

examined a source for microplastic absorption many would not have considered: sex toys.

The study was originally published in [Microplastics and Nanoplastics](#) in March 2023, and researchers will discuss the risks of sex toys at the 2023 Society for Risk Analysis Annual Conference. The majority of American adults report having used sex toys, which, by design, interact with intimate and permeable body parts. Many across the globe do not realize the potential risks of sex toys, which the researchers emphasize in order for consumers to make informed decisions.

Sipe and team examined potential risks associated with four types of currently available sex toys: anal toys, beads, dual vibrators, and external vibrators. In order of most to least micro-and-nano-plastic release, results found that the anal toy released the most particles, followed by beads, dual vibrators and external vibrators.

Another element to the risk of microplastics in sex toys is phthalates, known to be [endocrine disruptors](#). These were present in all tested sex toys at levels "exceeding hazard warnings."

"We assert that since the measured presence of phthalates in our [small sample size](#) exceeds the exposure limit for the same chemicals in the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) regulations in children's toys..., investigations into whether or not the risk scenarios are also similar [in sex toys] are prudent for public health protection," the researchers wrote.

More information: Joana Marie Sipe et al, Bringing sex toys out of the dark: exploring unmitigated risks, *Microplastics and Nanoplastics* (2023). [DOI: 10.1186/s43591-023-00054-6](https://doi.org/10.1186/s43591-023-00054-6)

Provided by Society for Risk Analysis

Citation: Microplastics come from everywhere—yes, that includes sex toys (2023, November 14)
retrieved 29 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2023-11-microplastics-everywhereyes-sex-toys.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.