

# PET 101:

## Everything you need to know about the world's #1 plastic.

Not all plastics are the same.

Bottles and containers made of PET (polyethylene terephthalate) are safe, lightweight, resealable, and shatter-resistant. They are designed to be fully recyclable, and are among the most studied and regulated packaging materials.

PET is the most recycled plastic in the world, and the only plastic designated as #1. Learn more at [PositivelyPET.org](https://www.PositivelyPET.org).



## Environment

**PET bottles and containers are made to be remade. They are fully recyclable and can be made with up to 100% recycled content, making PET the most environmentally friendly packaging option.**

- PET is the world's most widely recycled plastic; more than [3 billion pounds](#) of PET bottles and containers are collected for recycling each year in North America.
- PET can be [recycled over and over](#), serving consumers around the world in many forms, again and again.
- If US soda drinkers chose PET plastic bottles over aluminum cans for one year, that's equivalent to preventing SO<sub>2</sub> emissions, which cause acid rain, from [100 US power plants](#).
- As of 2024, [73% more recycled PET](#) is used in new products made annually in the US and Canada than in 2010.
- In 2024, [62% of the recycled PET](#) used in the US and Canada went into making new PET bottles.
- PET plastic is [significantly lighter](#) than alternatives like glass, reducing transportation costs, fuel consumption, and emissions. In fact, PET bottles are now [40% lighter](#) than they were in 2000.
- When recycled PET is used to make new products, it results in [59% lower greenhouse gas emissions](#) compared to using new (virgin) PET.
- Packaging water in a 16.9 oz. PET plastic bottle generates [74% fewer greenhouse gas emissions](#) than a 12 oz. aluminum can.

## Economy

**PET has a huge impact on the economy:**

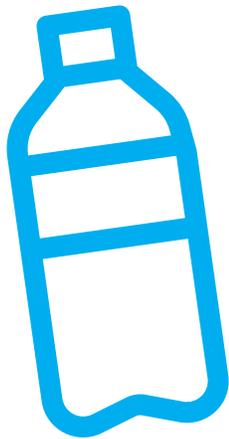
- The PET packaging industry is valued at [\\$41 billion annually](#) and contributes to critical sectors such as medical, food, beverage, and automotive.
- The plastics industry overall generates [more than a million jobs in the US](#), with many of these positions in areas such as PET manufacturing, PET-related product development, and PET recycling operations.
- Due to inadequate waste collection systems, we lose an estimated [\\$80 billion to \\$120 billion](#) in material value each year because of the failure to recycle plastic waste globally.



# Performance

PET plastic offers high performance compared to other materials, particularly in packaging and protecting food and beverages.

- PET packaging and bottles showcase products with crystal clarity and luster.
- PET demonstrates excellent resistance to moisture, microorganisms, and degradation.
- PET bottles and containers are more durable and versatile than aluminum, and unlike glass, PET is shatter-resistant.
- PET is FDA-approved for contact with food and beverages.
- PET does not contain and has never contained bisphenol A (BPA).



## Disaster Recovery

PET is essential to communities recovering from catastrophic disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods.

- From food and water to soap and critical healthcare supplies, PET bottles and containers make it possible for communities and families to get the lifesaving items they need and get back on their feet.
- Lightweight and shatter-resistant PET bottles and containers are safe even in hazardous conditions.
- FDA-approved, food-safe PET plastic packaging enables survivors to consume safe food and clean drinking water, without fear of contamination.
- All PET containers used in recovery efforts can be recycled, further helping the planet.

## End Waste, Recycle the 1

Recycling PET, the world's #1 plastic, is one of the simplest ways to help [reduce plastic pollution](#).

Read the [three steps to end plastic waste](#), and learn how to recycle right:

- Choose PET plastic over alternative packaging and **always** recycle when finished.
- Do not place PET bottles or containers in the regular trash, or they won't be recycled.
- Rinse PET bottles and containers thoroughly before placing them in a recycling bin.
- Lids or caps are often not made of PET, but they can be recycled with the bottle if left on.



## Get Involved

Amidst opposing viewpoints, staying educated is essential. Treating all plastics the same does a disservice to our economy and the environment. Here are some ways to advocate for PET:

- Utilize [Positively PET resources](#) to share information about PET plastic with your family, friends, and community.
- Submit an article to your local newspaper about why PET is more sustainable than glass and aluminum.
- More bins mean more wins! If your community doesn't have recycling bins, contact your local government officials to request that they be installed.
- Contact your local recycling center to find out if they allow school and community tours.

