


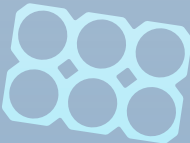






How Long Does Plastic Last?

There are no natural processes to decompose plastic, so there is no way to know exactly how long plastic in our environment will last. Estimates range from hundreds of years to never. That's because plastics are synthetic, petroleum-based polymers. This is why it's important to consider alternatives to single-use plastics that commonly end up as pollution in our environment.

Item & Lifespan in Environment		Alternative(s)
CIGARETTE BUTTS 1-5 years		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quit smoking
PLASTIC BAG 100 years		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reusable shopping bag• Use boxes or bins for groceries
PLASTIC STRAW 200 years		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Metal reusable straw• Paper straws• Skip the straw
PLASTIC SIX-PACK RING 400 years		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carboard containers• Glued cans• Individual cans/bottles
PLASTIC WATER BOTTLE 450 years		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reusable water bottle
POLYSTYRENE TAKE-OUT CONTAINERS 450 years		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biodegradable containers (i.e. cardboard)• Reusable container
PLASTIC FISHING LINE 600 years		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Biodegradable fishing line
BALLOONS Possibly Never		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper decorations such as streamers• Durable decorations that are reusable

References
1. Recycle Montana. How Long Until It's Gone?. Website: <https://recyclemontana.org/how-long-until-its-gone/>
2. U.S. National Park Service; Mote Marine Lab, Sarasota, FL and "Garbage In, Garbage Out," Audubon magazine, Sept/Oct 1998.
3. Earth Respect. How long until it's gone? Website: <https://earthrespect.wordpress.com/2015/09/17/how-long-until-its-gone/>