



PET PLASTIC – #1 CHOICE



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is PET (or P.E.T.E.) plastic?

A: PET stands for polyethylene terephthalate, a plastic resin and a form of polyester. Polyethylene terephthalate is a polymer that is formed by combining two monomers called modified ethylene glycol and purified terephthalic acid.

PET is the type of plastic labeled with the #1 code on or near the bottom of bottles and containers and is commonly used to package soft drinks, water, juice, peanut butter, salad dressings and oil, cosmetics and household cleaners.

PET is a popular package for food and non-food products. Manufacturers use PET plastic to package products because of its strength, thermo-stability and transparency. Customers choose PET because it is inexpensive, lightweight, resealable, shatter-resistant and recyclable.

Recycled polyethylene terephthalate (RPET) can be used to make many new products, including fiber for polyester carpet; fabric for T-shirts, long underwear, athletic shoes, luggage, upholstery and sweaters; fiberfill for sleeping bags and winter coats; industrial strapping, sheet and film; automotive parts, such as luggage racks, headliners, fuse boxes, bumpers, grilles and door panels; and new PET containers for both food and non-food products.

Q: Plastics often contain plasticizers and stabilizers which can transfer to foods; does PET contain any similar additives?

A: PET used for food and beverage bottle applications is a very pure form and free of any plasticizers or added stabilizers. There are no additives of this type which could migrate into or affect the packaged food or beverage.

Q: Can PET itself react with foods?

A: PET is a very inert material and does not react with any known food products. It is for this reason that PET is a good choice for all kinds of food packaging.

Q: What happens to PET if it's dumped into landfills?

A: It will stay there, inert, similar to glass. It will not degrade biologically, one of the reasons it is such a good choice for packaging foods is its resistance to attack by micro-organisms. It will be crushed flat without fragmenting and occupy less space than the more rigid glass. It is resistant to the chemical species found in landfills and will not give rise to any harmful leachates. In fact these very properties are utilized in stabilization of landfills and processed baled PET bottles have been used for stabilization of the foundations for road works.

Q: Are plastics a major user of scarce oil resources?

A: No, most (88%) of the oil extracted from the earth is used as a fuel for transport systems, heating appliances or for generation of electricity. The amount used for chemicals and plastics is small in comparison. In fact, the use of plastics actually saves those resources as a result of lighter containers being transported from the filler to the retailer.

Q: Does PET contain Bis-phenol A (BPA)?

A: Bis-phenol A is not used in the production of PET material, nor is it used as a chemical building block for any of the materials used in the manufacture of PET.

Q: Is PET plastic safe?

A: Absolutely! The safest and most recyclable plastic used in the food and beverage industry.

Plastic Resin Types

Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET or PETE)

Product examples: Disposable soft drink bottles, water bottles, and cough syrup bottles.

High-density Polyethylene (HDPE)

Product examples: Milk jugs, toys, liquid detergent bottles, and shampoo bottles.

Polyvinyl Chloride (V or PVC)

Product examples: meat wrap, cooking oil bottles and plumbing pipes.

Low-density Polyethylene (LDPE)

Product examples: Cling wrap, grocery bags and sandwich bags.

Polypropylene (PP)

Product examples: Disposable coffee cups and clam-shell takeout container.

Others, like Polycarbonate (PC)

Product examples: Baby bottles, some reusable water bottles and stain-resistant food-storage containers.