

Styrofoam™ Fact Sheet

What is Styrofoam™?: This product is an effective insulator made from petroleum and 95% air. Styrofoam™ is the common name for this use of polystyrene.

How much do we use?: Just in cups, Americans use 25 billion pounds annually—enough to circle the globe almost 500 times.

People:

- Styrene (the building block) can cause irritation of the skin, eyes, and respiratory system.
- Styrene can also have damaging effects on the digestive and central nervous systems.
- Applying heat to Styrofoam,™ such as in a microwave, can be harmful to the human reproductive system.

Planet:

- Styrofoam™ is the 5th largest component of hazardous waste.
- Styrofoam™ releases chemicals that pollute the air and water, especially when broken or combusted.
- The release of Styrofoam's™ chemicals can contribute to the breaking down of the ozone layer.
- While the technology exists to recycle Styrofoam™, the market is very small and few communities offer this option at this time.

Profit:

- Finite resources are utilized for the production of Styrofoam™, which means that the sustainable choice is to avoid purchasing and using this product.
- A new material production method using “biopolymers” takes plant-based material to create similar products that are more easily disposed.

What can I do?

- Always use paper or (preferably) reusable cups and dishware in place of Styrofoam™.
- Remember that OHIO does not allow the purchase of non-packaging Styrofoam™ —always choose more sustainable alternatives, such as recycled content or reusable or products.
- Save and reuse Styrofoam™ packaging you receive for other shipments OR call the Office of Recycling and Zero Waste for a pick-up so it can be recycled: 740-593-0231.

*For further details, please visit the source of this information at:
<http://www.earthresource.org/campaigns/capp/capp-styrofoam.html>*