

Best Laundry Detergent for You & Torch Lake



TRUE BLUE News

Do You Know?

The average household does 400 loads of laundry a year—That’s a lot of laundry detergent!

- Liquid laundry detergent is typically packaged in large plastic jugs.
- Most are not recycled. The recycling rate for plastics in the United States is 5%.
- Recently, laundry pods, sheets and strips were introduced as alternatives to plastic bottles.

Microplastics are persistent and pose potential harm to human health.

- In the Great Lakes, microplastics and even smaller nanoplastics have contaminated every level of the food web from algae to fish.
- When people eat fish, they ingest microplastics.
- When they drink water-especially bottled water, they ingest microplastics.

The average person consumes up to a credit card of plastic or 5 grams each week.

Microplastics called microbeads in soaps were found to be environmentally detrimental and banned in 2015.



Photo: Torch Conservation Center

Detergent pods are encased in a synthetic, petroleum chemical called polyvinyl alcohol.

- Detergent sheets and strips adhere to the same chemical- polyvinyl alcohol.
- Polyvinyl alcohol (PVA or PVOH) is a PLASTIC.
- PVA does biodegrade into carbon dioxide and water, under specific temperature and bacteria conditions, but research indicates conditions needed to biodegrade PVA do not exist in wastewater treatment plants.

Research estimates 75% of PVA is released into the environment as microplastics.

- PVA pods or sheets dissolve in water and are broken down into smaller microplastics (less than 5 millimeters long).
- About 15% of PVA derived microplastic directly enters rivers and lakes, while the majority is carried in sludge and applied to fields.

Homes in the Torch Lake Watershed use septic systems for their wastewater treatment.

- Your septic system's drain field returns water to our groundwater. Groundwater carries toxic chemicals into our drinking water wells and Torch Lake.

- Controlling what goes down our drains is the best prevention for water pollution.
- While the microplastic concentration in Torch Lake is unknown, Lake Michigan average surface water concentrations of microplastics is 17,000 particles/km².

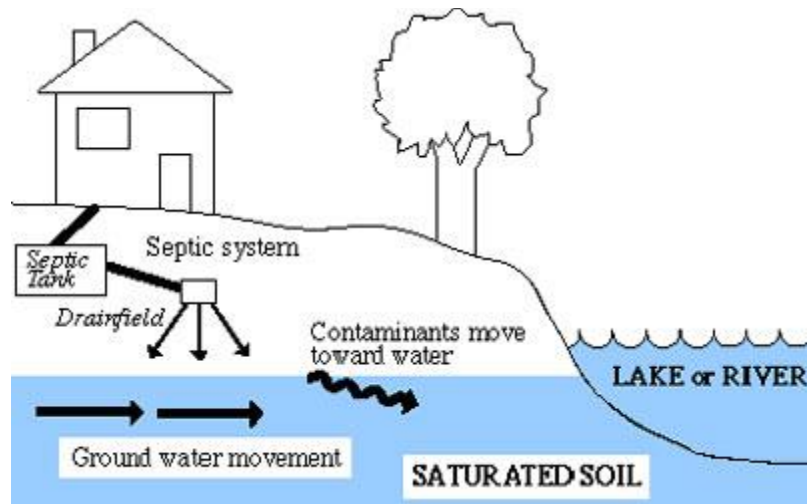


Image: Univ. of Mn Ext.

Key Facts:

Safety Concerns

In homes with children younger than 6-The American Association of Poison Control Centers received an estimated 103,607 calls between 2013 and August 2021 related to liquid laundry packet detergent exposure in children younger than 6. Exposure can occur in several ways: ingestion or inhalation, getting the detergent in the eyes, and absorbing it through the skin.

In homes with a cognitively impaired family member-The Consumer Product Safety Commission is aware of eight deaths related to ingesting liquid laundry detergent packets in the U.S. between 2012 and early 2017: Two were young children, and six were adults with dementia. As a result of this data from the CPSC highlighting the potential risks of laundry detergent packets to adults with dementia.

In homes with teens-As part of a 2018 social media trend, teens put pods into their mouths, even biting into them. This stunt can cause harm and trips to the ER.



LakeLove Looks Like

Keep microplastics out of our drinking water and Torch Lake.

Step 1. Stop using laundry detergent pods and sheets unless they do NOT contain PVA. These products DO contain PVA.

Pods	Sheets
Aspen Laundry Detergent Pods	Beyond Laundry Sheets
Droppps Laundry Detergent Pods	Earth Breeze Laundry Sheets
Grab Green Pods	Eco Roots Laundry Detergent Sheets
Tide Pods Free and Gentle	Frey Laundry Sheets
	Kind Laundry Detergent Sheets
	TRU Earth Laundry Strips

Step 2. [Find non-plastic packaging with plant-based laundry detergents.](#)

Read the labels.

- Environmental Working Group (EWG) rates laundry detergents based on their ingredients.
- Avoid detergents with synthetic petroleum chemicals like Dioaxane.
- Avoid Tide Ultra Powder Detergent: EWG Rating of D (It contains 1-4- Dioxane.)

Option 1. Powder detergent in a Cardboard box (like the old days)

- Meliora Laundry Powder Unscented: EWG Rating A
- 7th Generation Zero Plastic Laundry Detergent Powder: EWG Rating B
- Tide Ultra Free and Gentle Powder Detergent: EWG Rating B

Option 2. Laundry Detergent Tablets in Metal Tin or Paper Pouch

- 7th Generation Zero Plastic Laundry Detergent Mineral Rich Tablet Fragrance Free: EWG Rating A
- Blueland Laundry Detergent Tablets: EWG highest ranking Verified (A+) Available from Blueland for \$30 (60 tablets 50 cents/load)

Option 3. Liquid detergent in a glass or aluminum container.

- Dirty Labs Bio Enzyme Laundry Detergent Free and Clear; EWG's highest rating Verified (A+) Available from Amazon \$29 or Dirty Lab \$26 (80 loads 31cents/load)



New type of Laundry Liquid Detergent Packaging-Aluminum Bottle

Photo: TCC

Heard around the Torch Lake Watershed

Meg- " I use laundry pods that come in a box not a plastic container. It is easier to carry a pod to the laundry mat. I put my clothes with the pod in a washing bag to catch any microfibers released."

Lyn- "I use laundry strips to avoid the plastic laundry jugs. I'm passionate about line drying my clothes as much as possible. It's hard in MI winters though the Amish do it.

Stephanie-"I normally use Biokleen Liquid marked on the bottle "Safer Choice" but it comes in a plastic jug. I always get every last bit out by adding water to the bottle."
Biokleen free & clear Laundry Liquid's EWG score is B with low environmental concern.
Biokleen Laundry Powder free & clear also has EWG B score and the box packaging maybe more recyclable.



No Ice Winter

Photo: Peg Comfort

3 More Lake-friendly Laundry Habits

1. Use less water
 - Wash clothes less frequently—only when really soiled and handwash small spots
 - Wash FULL loads for energy and wash efficiency.
2. Use less energy
 - Wash with Cold water
 - Air dry on drying rack or clothesline.
3. [Use a natural fabric softener in your dryer.](#)
Purchase Locally-made dryer balls
Available at the TRUE BLUE Gallery in Alden
Opening May 24, 2024

What laundry tips would you like to share with us?

Send your tips to: Trish@conservetorch.org



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Disclaimer:

Torch Conservation Center does NOT have any financial or other connection to the products listed. Torch Conservation Center's goal is to keep you, your family, your septic system and Torch Lake safe from toxins.

Torch Conservation Center recognizes there are many perspectives on this topic with research constantly evolving. [Click for more lake-friendly practices.](#)

At [Torch Conservation Center](#), we **BELIEVE**
an informed Torch Lake Watershed community cares for Torch Lake
and keeps toxins, nutrients, sediments and invasive species out of the water.

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Helping Torch Lake is just a click away.

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