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### Harm and Horrors of Glitter Pollution

Why do people like shiny things? Naturally, gemstones or precious metals have no intrinsic value, but they fascinate us with their beauty. Scientists found that sparkly surfaces remind humans of water, which is vital for survival. However, some believe that love for glitter may cause detrimental effects on life on this planet.

Environmental problems have been a hot topic for discussion for a long time, but the theme of microplastics is relatively new. But, of course, everyone has probably heard that microplastics are everywhere, from amniotic fluids to mount Everest. In brief, these are all particles smaller than five millimeters, so glitter falls into this category.

Undeniably, plastic sparkles are usually unattainable for fun and celebrations. It is impossible to name all the shiny things, but most commonly, these are makeup, nail polishes, clothes, gift cards, and wrapping paper. For instance, a regular music festival, a Halloween or Christmas party would include all sorts of glitter and harm the environment.

So why exactly is this kind of microplastic bad for nature? First, the small size makes glitter pollution hard to track and prevent. Then, through water circulation, glitter appears everywhere, even in the most protected areas, where no human has set foot. Also, because these particles are already small, they take too long to disintegrate fully.



Additionally, scientists often mention marine life that suffers from glitter. For instance, polluted rivers flow into seas and oceans, where small underwater inhabitants take sparkles for food. Once plankton and mollusks eat glitter, bigger fish eat them, and the food chain continues. As a result, even whales and sharks have microplastics in their bodies.

By this logic, people are the next in the chain of glitter pollution since they consume fish. However, food is one of the many sources of shiny microplastics in the human body (Horton and Barnes 140349). The tiny particles predominantly end up inside us through the stomach and airways. Everybody, who regularly does makeup, knows that fragments of eyeshadows, highlighters, or powders float in the air.

Fortunately, glitter is too big to enter blood vessels or cells. But, this beauty is still dangerous for our health. Many unethical manufacturers use harmful chemicals, and heavy metals, so close contact with their glitter is something people should avoid at all costs.

There are a few solutions to the glitter problem. First, big cosmetics businesses change their concepts to be more environmentally friendly by using biodegradable or vegan materials. One of the most famous plastic glitter substitutes is cellulose from the eucalyptus tree. This revolutionary idea helped companies create safe and pretty sparkles.

Another option for preventing glitter pollution for women is changing the makeup removal routine. Since running water takes particles down the sink and to the ocean, wet wipes are the best solution. This way, makeup glitters get on the cloth instead of scattering everywhere (Tagg and Ivar do Sul 51). Besides, a low-waste holiday trend might help to eliminate the glitter problem. Many eco-friendly influencers use their fame to popularize the idea of recyclable holiday decorations, leading others by their example.



Overall, the general public understands the severity of glitter pollution to the environment. Even though the goal of cleaning nature to the fullest is unattainable, there are a few decent ideas. Responsible production and consumption can help prevent harm to humans and animals.

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Work Cited

Horton, Alice A., and David K.A. Barnes. "Microplastic Pollution in a Rapidly Changing World: Implications for Remote and Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems." *Science of The Total Environment*, vol. 738, 2020, p. 140349., <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scitotenv.2020.140349>.

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