

An illustration of an underwater scene. A large, translucent blue plastic bottle with a yellow cap is tilted, pouring a stream of small yellow dots (representing microplastics) and larger clear bubbles into the water. Three people wearing diving helmets are in the water: one on the left, one in the middle, and one on the right who appears to be reaching out towards the stream of microplastics. In the background, there is a large blue wave, a small bird flying in the sky, and a shark swimming near the bottom right. The overall color palette is various shades of blue and yellow.

In Search of Microplastics

A small illustration of a green pear and an orange.

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In Search of Microplastics

A comic by EIT Food and CSIC



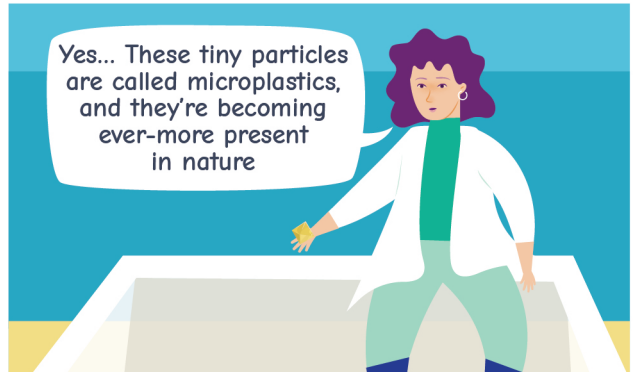
Hi, I'm Dr. Lina! I'm a scientist and I research one of the most ubiquitous contaminants in nature: microplastics. Join me in an adventure to learn about these particles up close and discover the impact they can have on ecosystems and on the food we eat. Are you ready for a microscopic journey?

This comic book has been created by the Annual Food Agenda project to highlight one of the most pressing problems in food-safety and environmental conservation of our day. From scientists to consumers, all agents of the food industry and regulatory agencies have a crucial role in stopping microplastic pollution.












Sunlight degrades plastic waste, making it release microplastics

The illustration shows a beach with a yellow sand dune. A large, transparent net is being pulled up from the water, and a stream of small yellow dots (microplastics) is being released from it. A person is visible on the net. In the background, there are blue waves, a green coastline, and a blue sky with a few clouds and a bird.

At sea, rubbish also produces microplastics when shaken by the waves. It's a serious problem!

The illustration shows a blue sea with a large white plastic bottle floating. The bottle is being shaken by waves, and a stream of small yellow dots (microplastics) is being released from it. In the background, there are blue waves, a green coastline, and a blue sky with a few clouds and a bird.



Unfortunately, it's a global problem. Large swathes of land are polluted by these particles. They come from food containers, hygiene products, textiles...

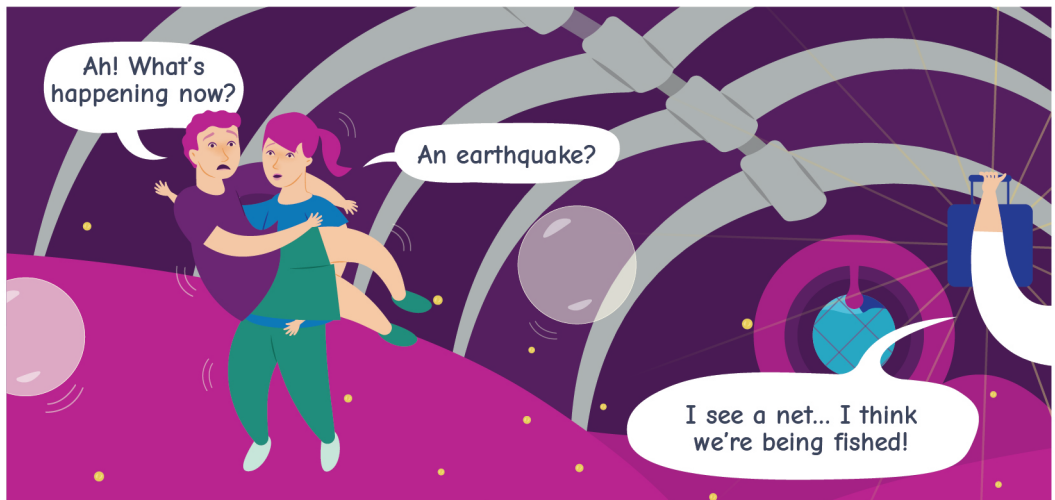
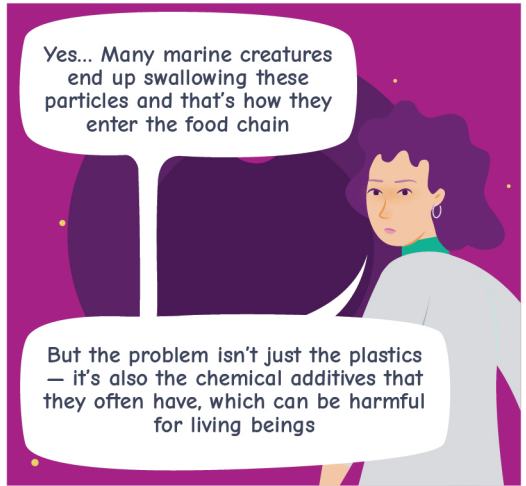
The illustration shows a woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a green turtleneck and a white earring. She is looking slightly to the right. The background is a light blue gradient.

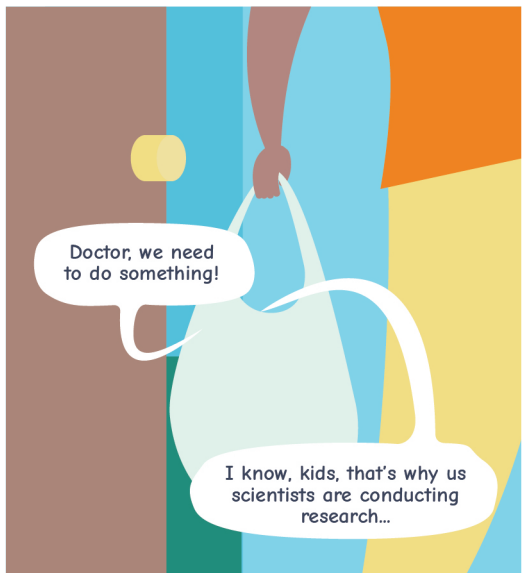
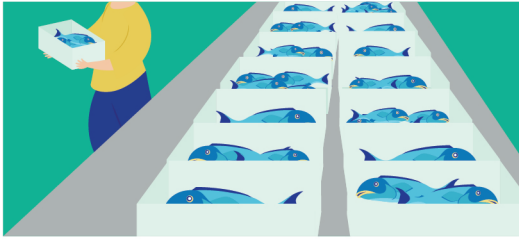
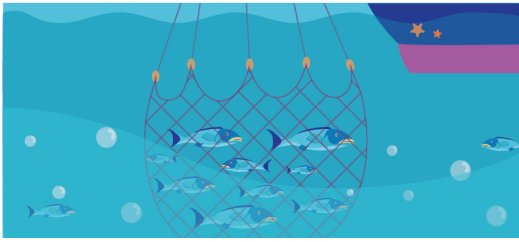


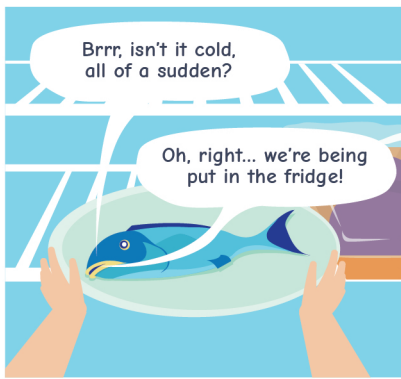


Microplastics also greatly pollute the sea, causing harm to marine species. They can trigger developmental problems, they affect their feeding and microplastics can even kill them









I get that you're worried, but the truth is we're already exposed to microplastics in many packaged and non-packaged foods, or in bottled water. And that's not the only pathway — even the air we breathe has these tiny particles



There are still many things we don't know about microplastics' effects on human health, but we're becoming increasingly aware of this threat and it's urgent that we work towards finding solutions





Luckily, scientists at institutions like the Spanish National Research Council are already studying how microplastics affect human health. This will make our food increasingly safe!

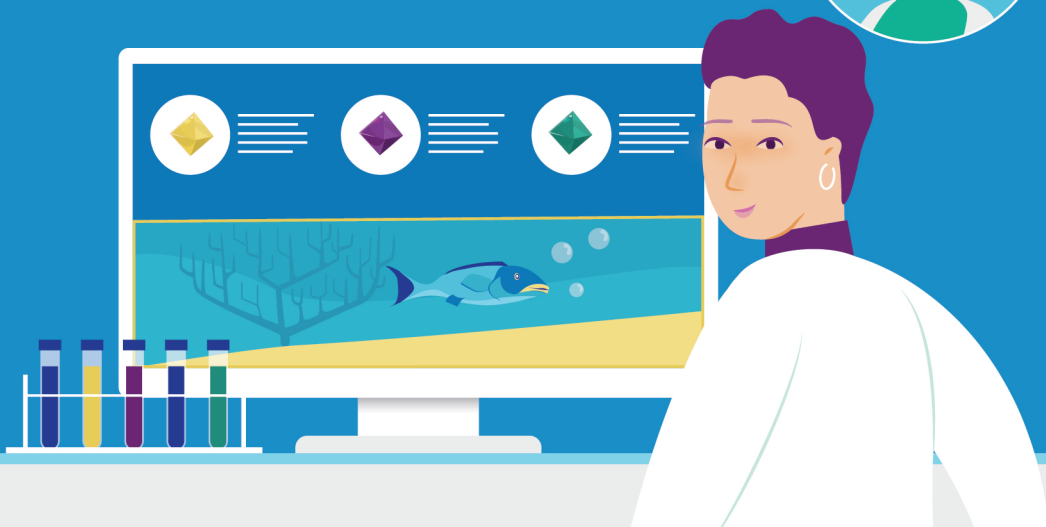


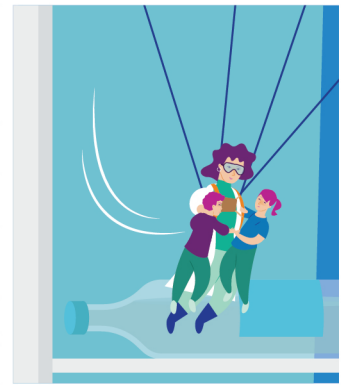
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But that's not all! Scientists are also developing new ways to remove this waste and to create biodegradable materials











DIRECTION AND SUPERVISION:

M. Victoria Moreno-Arribas

Institute of Food Science Research (CIAL), CSIC-UAM

COLABORATION:

Alba Tamargo, Natalia Molinero,
Cristina Jiménez y Laura Parro

Institute of Food Science Research (CIAL), CSIC-UAM

DEVELOPMENT, DESIGN AND LAYOUT:

Scienseed SL

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Institute
of Animal Reproduction and Food Research
Polish Academy of Sciences
in Olsztyn



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