

# Microplastics In Tap Water and Beer Around the Great Lakes, and Everywhere Else

A new study sampled twelve different beers in the Great Lakes area and found all to be contaminated with microplastics. Researchers also surveyed tap water from the same region and found microplastics in eight of the nine samples as well.

The study was published in the online journal PLOS ONE last month. Most microplastics discovered were 5 millimeters in length or shorter, according to the researchers. For reference, a penny is 19 millimeters in diameter.

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The study was led by UMN School of Public Health graduate student Mary Kosuth. Sherri Mason, of the State University of New York at Fredonia, is a revered expert in microplastics contamination. She assisted with the study. UMN School of Public Health associate professor Betsy Wattenberg oversaw the study.

Wattenberg found it interesting that the amount of plastic in the beer samples did not coincide with the amount of plastic found in the tap water used to make the beer.

*The amount of microplastics detected in the beer didn't necessarily match the amount of microplastics detected in the water that was used to make the beer. And that sort of suggests that the plastics can be introduced at different steps in the process of making the beer." – Wattenberg*

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The same team also collected 159 tap water samples from 14 countries and discovered that 81% of the samples tested also had microplastic contamination.

*I think what was surprising was the widespread contamination, that the contamination was detected in tap water throughout the world in many sources of tap water from both urban sources and rural sources, in both developing countries and developed countries," – Betsy Wattenberg told Wisconsin Public Radio.*

There was also a German beer study from 2014 that found microplastics in all 24 brands of beer analyzed.