Environmental Problems

Environmentally, plastic is a growing disaster. Most plastics are made from petroleum, a non-renewable resource extracted and processed using energy-intensive techniques that destroy fragile ecosystems. Plastic packaging – especially the ubiquitous plastic bag – is an enormous source of landfill waste and is regularly eaten by numerous marine and land animals, to fatal consequences.

Health Risks

In terms of health risks, the evidence is growing that chemicals leached from plastics used in cooking and food/drink storage are harmful to human health. The most disturbing of these are hormone (endocrine) disrupters, such as Bisphenol A (BPA), which can stimulate the growth of cancer cells. Exposure to BPA at a young age can cause genetic damage, and BPA has been linked to recurrent miscarriage in women. The health risks of plastic are significantly amplified in children, whose immune and organ systems are developing and are more vulnerable. The manufacture of plastic, as well as its destruction by incineration, pollutes air, land and water and exposes workers to toxic chemicals, including carcinogens. The evidence of health risks from certain plastics is increasingly appearing in established, peer-reviewed scientific journals.