

Dear Recycle Lady



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Dear Recycle Lady,

Are balloons really dangerous? They have used by kids and for parties for years. Likes Balloons

**Dear Likes Balloons,**

**Balloons, while often used for happy occasions and celebrations, can be dangerous for children. How many times have you seen a child stretching and popping a flat balloon in their mouth? The danger of an uninflated balloon being sucked into the mouth of a child has been repeatedly documented. Being flexible rubber, the balloon can cover the child's larynx/windpipe and totally obstruct their ability to breathe – like spreading plastic wrap over a bowl. Their attempts to breathe or cough (with increasing panic), creates a suction that results in the balloon being pulled further into the airway. Resuscitation efforts, at this point, are generally futile with tragic results. Readers, I'm sorry if this is a frightening subject, but if it saves the life of just one child, it is worth including it in this column.**

**Balloons can also be deadly for wildlife. Released balloons, or balloons that have gotten loose, can be mistaken for food by birds, animals, and marine life and they can harm or even kill them. Additionally, animals' feet, wings, or fins can become entangled in balloon strings potentially causing harm. In the ocean, a balloon can be mistaken for a jelly fish and endangered sea turtles have fatally ingested them. Let's find a safer, less harmful, way to celebrate these events.**

Dear Recycle Lady,

Can colored paper and office paper be mixed for shredding? Shredder

**Dear Shredder,**

**Yes. Light colored paper and office paper can be shredded together. However, red, black, and chartreuse colored paper should not be included, nor should paper with food wastes or grease. Paper that has been coated, treated in some way, or with food wastes or grease should not be added to your compost either. Did you know that adding shredded paper to your compost pile helps it to absorb excess moisture? It's an excellent alternative use for shredded paper.**

Dear Recycle Lady

How do I prevent microplastics from occurring during laundry? Laundry Lady

**Dear Laundry Lady,**

**Microplastics are tiny plastic particles that can be seen only under a microscope. One way you can keep down the number of these harmful particles is to use laundry bags for synthetic clothing. The bags help collect the microfibers, a type of microplastics that are on synthetic clothing. The friction and turbulence in washing machines cause the microfibers to be stripped off and they then enter the wastewater, eventually ending up in the environment. Choosing clothing made from natural fibers, such as wool, silk, cotton, and linen, rather than synthetic fibers, is another way to reduce the number of synthetic microfibers in your laundry water. A third way is to hang freshly laundered clothes outside on a line. Using a dryer causes also causes synthetic clothes to release the harmful microfibers. Plus, the dryer shortens the lifespan of your clothing. According to <https://www.bonandberg.com/post/micro-plastics>, washing machine and textile manufacturers, as well as non-governmental organizations are working hard to find new solutions to help stop the release of these harmful fibers. The French government recently passed laws that require microplastic filters in all new washing machines by 2025.**

Good News: Kudos to the Patagonia founder, Yvon Chouinard, who made headlines with his family's decision to give away their company and direct all profits to fighting the environmental crisis and defending nature. They received no financial reward in doing so, just peace of mind that Patagonia will help protect the planet. (fto.com)

**Have questions about recycling, or interesting information about recycling? Send questions or requests to [recyclelady@greenbrier-swa.com](mailto:recyclelady@greenbrier-swa.com). Dear Recycle Lady is sponsored jointly by the Greenbrier Recycling Center and Greenworks Recycling.**