

## TOP TIPS FOR COUNTING

### Separate and count every piece

Some products will have a mix of materials. A pack of raspberries might have a tray that's hard plastic, a lid that's soft plastic film and a little protective pad inside, like soft bubble wrap. Please separate and count each piece.

### Is it hard or soft plastic?

Checked the tables below and still aren't sure it's hard or soft plastic? Throw it up in the air. If it drops straight down it's likely to be hard plastic. If it floats to the ground more slowly, it's probably soft.

### Don't worry – trust your gut

Use your own judgement and instinct to choose your plastic waste categories. Whatever you feel is right probably is!

## CAN'T FIND AN ITEM?

We all use and love different products, and so throw different things away. We've gathered as many examples as we can think of to help you categorise your plastics for your big count. If you can't find your item, we hope the examples still provide a decent guide.






## KEY TERMS

Term	Definition
Hard plastic	Hard plastic has a sturdier, more solid and defined form – they tend to be a bit more 3D.
Soft plastic	Being very thin and flimsy, soft plastics can generally be screwed up into a small ball in your hand, or smoothed flat.
Break-away band (hard plastic)*	Thin and hard plastic band that's ripped off when opening bottles under the cap or lid.
Break-away band (soft plastic)*	Flimsy plastic band usually wrapped around a jar or bottle. It's often perforated to help you tear it off.
Nets*	Bag or pack made of finely woven or meshed plastic.

## FOOD & DRINK

Products that are used to package or wrap food or drink.

Category	Examples A-Z
 <b>Small Bottles (Under 500ml)</b> (water, soft drinks, sauces, etc.)	Bottles for: cooking oil fizzy drinks honey or syrup ketchup mayonnaise milk soft drinks sports drinks squash/cordial water yoghurt drinks
 <b>Large bottles (over 500ml)</b> (water, squash, cooking oil, milk, etc.)	
 <b>Hard plastic caps and lids</b> (from bottles, cartons, jars, etc.)	Hard plastic caps and lids for things like: bottles coffee jars/tins cooking oil herb jars honey jam juice cartons ketchup Marmite peanut butter spreads



**Peelable film lids**  
(from soft fruits, fish, falafel, dips, etc.)

Peelable film lids are thin layers of plastic that seal containers and prevent leaks. They can be found on all types of packaging including:

chilled snacks	falafel	plant-based foods
chocolate mousse	fish	ready meals
coleslaw	fruit and veg	samosa
cream	meat	stock pots
deli items (eg. olives)	microwave meals	yoghurt
dips	milk bottles or cartons	



**Fruit and veg trays, pots and their hard lids**  
(berries, grapes, stir fry, tomatoes, etc.)

Lots of fruits, vegetables and salads come in hard plastic trays or pots. Some examples include:

beetroot	olive pots	strawberries
blueberries	on-the-go pots	tomatoes
fruit pots	raspberries	
mushrooms	stir-fry	

Include your hard plastic lids if they are the same material.



**Fruit, veg and salad bags, wrappers and nets**  
(salad, bananas, cucumber, lemons, etc.)

Bags, wrappers and nets\* are made from soft plastic that package fresh produce such as:

apples	lemon nets	potatoes
bananas	onions	pre-prepared fruit or veg
carrots	orange nets	salad leaves
cucumber	pears	sliced vegetables
garlic nets	peppers	



**Black pots, tubs and trays**  
(ready meals, chilled foods, cooked meats, etc.)

Black plastic pots and trays used to package food like:

bacon	chilled foods	microwave meals
beef	ham (cooked)	ready meals
chicken (cooked)	lamb	sausages

We're only counting black plastic here. If it's green, blue, brown, pink... categorise under 'Pots, tubs and trays'.



**Pots, tubs and trays**  
(yoghurt, dips, butter, pastries, meat, etc.)

Pots, tubs and trays are used for a range of food, such as:

baked goods	margarine	ready meals
butter	meat	saltfish
chilled foods	paneer	samosa
cooked meats	pasta salad	soup
cookies	pastries (croissants, danishes)	stock pots
dips	plant-based alternatives	takeaways
fish	poppadoms	tortellini
ice cream		Yoghurt

Count lids as a separate piece if they're made of the same material as the container, like with margarine, soup or ice cream tubs.

Remember not to include fruit, veg or salad trays or pots – they have their own category.



**Snack bags, packets and wrappers**  
(crisps, biscuits, cereal bars, chocolate, etc.)

Snacks can be sweet or savoury, healthy or a treat. Count the soft plastic bags, wrappers and packets that package:

biscuits	cereal bars	peanuts
chewing gum	crisps (single, sharing, multipack)	popcorn
chocolate	ice creams or lollies	pretzels
cookies	oatcakes	rice cakes
crackers		sweets



**Other hard food and drink packaging**  
(coffee pods, plastic corks, polystyrene cups, etc.)

Any hard plastic food and drink packaging that doesn't have its own category should go in here, such as:

coffee cup lids	plastic wine corks
coffee pods	polystyrene takeaway trays
hard plastic breakaway bands	sweetener dispensers

Lots of our food comes wrapped in soft plastic packaging, including:









**Other soft food and drink packaging**  
(rice, bread bags, frozen peas, cling film, cheese, etc.)

apricots	lentils	raisins
beans	microwave rice/grains	rice
bread	mini cheese nets	rolls
breakaway bands*	multipack wrappers (baked	sauce sachets
butter blocks	beans, tinned tomatoes,	seasoning packs
cereal	etc.)	seeds
cheese	noodles	soft plastic breakaway
chickpeas	oats	bands*
cling film	packet sauces	sugar
coffee	pasta	teabag wrappers
couscous	pitta	tomato puree
dates	pizza	wraps
frozen food	pulses	yoghurt tubes
(chips, peas, etc.)		

Don't be surprised if most of your plastic packaging waste goes in here!



## CLEANING & TOILETRIES

Plastic packaging that protects, packages or wraps products used for your daily washing and self-care routine or to clean the house.

Category	Examples A-Z																		
 <p><b>Small bottles (up to 500ml)</b> (hand wash, shampoo, washing up liquid, etc.)</p>	<p>Bottles used to package household cleaning or toiletries products such as:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>bleach</td> <td>hand wash</td> <td>stain remover</td> </tr> <tr> <td>bubble bath</td> <td>make-up remover</td> <td>sun cream</td> </tr> <tr> <td>conditioner</td> <td>mouth wash</td> <td>surface cleaner</td> </tr> <tr> <td>contact lens solution</td> <td>nail varnish remover</td> <td>toilet cleaner</td> </tr> <tr> <td>hair dye</td> <td>shampoo</td> <td>washing up liquid</td> </tr> <tr> <td>hand sanitiser</td> <td>shower gel</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	bleach	hand wash	stain remover	bubble bath	make-up remover	sun cream	conditioner	mouth wash	surface cleaner	contact lens solution	nail varnish remover	toilet cleaner	hair dye	shampoo	washing up liquid	hand sanitiser	shower gel	
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 <p><b>Pots, tubs and tubes</b> (moisturiser, suncream, laundry tablets, etc.)</p>	<p>Many toiletries come in plastic pots or tubs, including:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>dishwasher tablet tubs</td> <td>lip balm</td> <td>spot treatment</td> </tr> <tr> <td>hair gel or wax</td> <td>moisturiser</td> <td>sun cream</td> </tr> <tr> <td>hand cream</td> <td>shampoo</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>laundry tablet tubs</td> <td>shower gel</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	dishwasher tablet tubs	lip balm	spot treatment	hair gel or wax	moisturiser	sun cream	hand cream	shampoo		laundry tablet tubs	shower gel							
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 <p><b>Squeezy tubes</b> (toothpaste, make-up, skincare cream, etc.)</p>	<p>You can squeeze the contents out of squeezy tubes which package things like:</p> <p>make-up skincare cream toothpaste</p>																		
 <p><b>Other hard cleaning and toiletries packaging</b> (toothbrush packs, razor packs, mascara, etc.)</p>	<p>Any other hard packaging for cleaning and toiletry products such as:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>air freshener lids</td> <td>lipstick</td> <td>soap bottle pumps</td> </tr> <tr> <td>daily contact lens cases</td> <td>mascara</td> <td>toilet scent wrapper</td> </tr> <tr> <td>furniture polish lids</td> <td>razor packs</td> <td>toothbrush pack</td> </tr> <tr> <td>lip balm tubes</td> <td>roll-on deodorant</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	air freshener lids	lipstick	soap bottle pumps	daily contact lens cases	mascara	toilet scent wrapper	furniture polish lids	razor packs	toothbrush pack	lip balm tubes	roll-on deodorant							
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 <p><b>Other soft cleaning and toiletries packaging</b> (toilet roll wrap, dishwasher tabs, wet wipes packs, etc.)</p>	<p>Any soft plastic cleaning and toiletries packaging that packages:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>cleaning cloths</td> <td>laundry tablets</td> <td>wet wipes (just the pack though, not the wipes themselves, please)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>cleaning sponges</td> <td>toilet paper</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>dishwasher tablets</td> <td>travel tissues</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>kitchen roll</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	cleaning cloths	laundry tablets	wet wipes (just the pack though, not the wipes themselves, please)	cleaning sponges	toilet paper		dishwasher tablets	travel tissues		kitchen roll								
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## EVERYTHING ELSE

Any household plastic packaging that is not related to food, drink, cleaning or toiletries.

Category	Examples A-Z												
 <p><b>Other hard plastic packaging</b> (plastic packaging for toys, tech, stationery, DIY, etc.)</p>	<p>Any hard plastic that is not related to food, drink, cleaning or toiletries that packages items such as:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>DIY materials</td> <td>stationery</td> </tr> <tr> <td>electronics</td> <td>tech</td> </tr> <tr> <td>polystyrene foam</td> <td>toys</td> </tr> </table>	DIY materials	stationery	electronics	tech	polystyrene foam	toys						
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 <p><b>Other soft plastic packaging</b> (carrier bags, bubble wrap, clothes packaging, etc.)</p>	<p>Any soft packaging not related to food, drink cleaning or toiletries such as:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>biodegradable plastic</td> <td>compostable plastic</td> <td>pet food</td> </tr> <tr> <td>bubble wrap</td> <td>delivery packaging</td> <td>sticky tape</td> </tr> <tr> <td>carrier bags</td> <td>greetings card wrappers</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>clothing wrapping</td> <td>parcel bags</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	biodegradable plastic	compostable plastic	pet food	bubble wrap	delivery packaging	sticky tape	carrier bags	greetings card wrappers		clothing wrapping	parcel bags	
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## DON'T COUNT

For The Big Plastic Count, we're only interested in counting your plastic packaging waste. Not only is single-use packaging one of the main causes of waste, it's also the type of plastic with the best potential for big reductions in use.

That's why we're not asking you to count single-use items that have a particular use beyond just packaging, such as straws, cutlery or wet wipes. We're also not asking anyone to tally items like plasters, medication packaging or sanitary items because we don't want to risk anyone feeling ashamed for using plastic for health reasons.

Additionally, we also understand that some plastic is unavoidable. For example, people with disabilities who rely on single-use plastic items like straws, cutlery and wet wipes to gain and maintain their independence.

There are also some products that are made of a mix of materials such as plastic, paper and foil and so leave a much more complicated waste trail – these shouldn't be counted. This includes packaging such as oat milk or juice cartons, takeaway coffee cups, takeaway sandwich packaging or Pringles tubes.

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Food & Drink	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>cartons or TetraPak (juice, milk, soup, etc)</td> <td>multi-material packaging including:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>cans</td> <td>sandwich packaging</td> </tr> <tr> <td>coffee cups</td> <td>Pringles tubes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>cutlery</td> <td>straws</td> </tr> <tr> <td>glass bottles</td> <td>take away cups</td> </tr> </table>	cartons or TetraPak (juice, milk, soup, etc)	multi-material packaging including:	cans	sandwich packaging	coffee cups	Pringles tubes	cutlery	straws	glass bottles	take away cups
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Everything Else	<p>COVID testing waste</p> <p>electronics</p> <p>pet poo bags</p> <p>plant pots</p> <p>toys</p>										