

## Six Pack Rings Fact Sheet

The word **polymer** can be broken into two parts, “poly” means *many* and “mer” means *parts*. A **polymer** is a huge chain-like molecule made by combining many smaller parts. Six-Pack Rings are made from specific type of polymer referred to as a “plastic.”

### COOL FACTS

- Six pack rings are “photodegradable” meaning that they degrade, or break down, when exposed to light.
- Some polymers are made by people. Plastic is an example of a man-made or “synthetic” polymer. Some plastics can be recycled.
- Recycling is a series of activities that includes collecting recyclable materials that would otherwise be considered waste and making them into new products.
- Did you know that when a plastic is recycled, it is made into a new product? For example, a milk jug could be recycled into a picnic table or doghouse.
- The next time you fall asleep, you may be sleeping on what was once a soft-drink bottle. Sometimes, soft-drink bottles are recycled into pillow fillers!



Before Six-Pack Rings became photo-degradable, animals could become caught or trapped by them.

### FAQ's

**Q:** What do the numbers inside of triangles found on the bottom of plastic containers mean?

**A:** The numbers that you see on plastic bottles are called “recycling codes.” These symbols were designed in 1988 to allow recyclers to separate different types of plastics.

**Q:** Are all polymers plastics?

**A:** No, not all polymers are plastics but all plastics are polymers. Plastics are “synthetic polymers” which means they are man-made or not found in nature. There are many polymers found in nature which are called “natural polymers.” You may have a blouse made from silk which is a polymer that comes from the Silkworm. Also, proteins that you eat or drink such as fish or cow’s milk are natural polymers.

**Q:** Is plastic “good” or “bad?”

**A:** Plastics have contributed much to society and technology. They have assisted space missions and improved medical treatments. At the same time, plastics accumulate in landfills. Recycling keeps plastics out of landfills.

**Q:** When was plastic invented?

**A:** Dr. Leo Baekeland invented the first man-made plastic in 1907. This same plastic that Leo Baekeland invented is still used as electric insulator today!

**RELEVANCE TO OUR LIVES:** Plastics, which are made by polymers, are a large part of your everyday life! No matter your age, you rely on many plastics. Playing with plastic toys, watching television, playing video games, riding in car or bus and many other aspects of your daily life would not be possible without plastics.

### RESOURCES:

Hands on Plastics: <http://www.handsonplastics.com/>

Recycle City: <http://www.epa.gov/recyclecity/>

The Macrogalleria – a cyberwonderland of polymer fun:

<http://www.psrc.usm.edu/macrog/index.htm>