

Biodegradable Plastic – does it even exist?

And when a company claims that its packaging is biodegradable or compostable, what does that actually mean?

According to the ASTM standards council, biodegradable plastic degrades as the result of naturally occurring microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi and algae, that yield carbon dioxide (CO₂), water, inorganic compounds, and biomass at a rate consistent with other known compostable materials – leaving no visible, distinguishable or toxic residue.

So is there any biodegradable plastic that actually does this?

The quick answer is – yes – but not all biodegradable or compostable plastic decomposes or degrades at the same rate, under the same conditions.

We spent more than ten years developing out Omnidegradable®, flexible packaging, which means that all of our high barrier plastic bags, coffee bags, pouches, foils, zippers, and off-gassing valves will decompose when – and only when – they come into contact with microbes – microbes that are present in landfills, fresh and salt water (the ocean) and regular soil.

We named our plastic Omnidegradable® so it wouldn't be confused with other eco plastics that require specific conditions – such as sunlight and high temperatures to biodegrade. In other words, if those plastics were left in the ocean or soil, there is no evidence to suggest they will biodegrade any more than regular plastic.

Our plastic's only requirement for decomposition is the presence of microbes and time. They won't break down on shelves and they don't cost a fortune.

This is a big deal because traditional plastic is clogging out landfills and oceans and potentially leaking toxins into our soil and water. And this is not just a developing world problem, it's a major issue in North America too.

For more information, check out [The Truth About Plastic](#) or our frequently asked questions