



Written by [James Murphy](#) on August 28, 2023

Paper Straws Lauded by Climate Zealots May Contain Toxic Chemicals

Paper straws, which many environmentalists claim are good for the planet, may not be so environmentally friendly after all. According to a Belgian study, such straws may contain so-called “forever chemicals,” which, in addition to being bad for the environment, also pose risks to human health.

According to the [study](#), such straws, which are intended to reduce plastic pollution, also contain poly- and perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). PFAS are added to paper and plant-based straws to make them more water repellent and last longer, but those PFAS can migrate to foods ingested by humans. In humans, exposure to PFAS has been linked to male infertility, miscarriages, preeclampsia, increased risk of certain cancers, and liver damage.



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Beyond the risks to human health, researchers also found that the supposedly environmentally friendly straws may not be as “sustainable” as once thought.

“Straws made from plant-based materials, such as paper and bamboo, are often advertised as being more sustainable and eco-friendly than those made from plastic,” [said Thimo Groffen](#), an environmental scientist who was involved in the study. “However, the presence of PFAS in these straws means that’s not necessarily true.”

For the study, the researchers used a wide variety of straws available in Belgium, including paper straws, glass straws, bamboo straws, stainless steel straws, and plastic straws. Residual PFAS were detected in all the straw categories except for the stainless steel straws. Paper straws were most likely to retain the toxic “forever chemicals,” with bamboo straws also retaining larger amounts of PFAS.

In other words, the more “environmentally friendly” the straws were, the more toxic they were to humans.

Groffen suggested using stainless steel straws — or no straw at all.

“We did not detect any PFAS in stainless steel straws, so I would advise consumers to use this type of straw — or just avoid using straws at all.”

So, the paper and other plant-based straw solutions such as bamboo straws are not necessarily the environmental panacea that many hardcore environmentalists have said that they are.

“Small amounts of PFAS, while not harmful in themselves, can add to the chemical load already present in the body,” Groffen said.

In their attempt to demonize plastic straws, many environmentalists have claimed that paper straws



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and bamboo straws are a good and “sustainable” option. But the Belgian study shows that such straws are neither good for us nor “sustainable.”

“The presence of PFAS in plant-based straws shows that they are not necessarily biodegradable and that the use of such straws potentially contributes to human and environmental exposure of PFAS,” the study’s abstract stated.

What exactly are these PFAS?

According to the study: “Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a large family of more than 12000 manmade resistant perfluorinated chemicals. Their unique water-repellent and fire-resistant properties, as well as their thermal and chemical stability, ensure that these organic compounds are produced and used on a large industrial scale for various applications.”

The substances are so toxic to humans that the Biden administration’s Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed sweeping new [regulations](#) on PFAS, including banning their use in some cases.

“In January 2023, EPA proposed a significant new use rule (SNUR) that would strengthen the regulation of PFAS by preventing anyone from resuming use of inactive PFAS without EPA review,” the agency said.

In addition to their use in straws, PFAS are used for fire resistance and oil, stain, grease, and water repellency for certain products. According to the EPA, PFAS are used in the aerospace, automotive, building/construction, chemical processing, electronics, semiconductor, and textile industries.

So, another “solution” to address the so-called destruction of our environment turns out to be fool’s gold, a false panacea. Paper straws can now take their place alongside solar farms, windmills, and electric vehicles as failed solutions to a “problem” that exists only in the minds of environmental extremists.



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