

Vinyl Gloves – A Needless Product?

Many people in the medical, retail or health and safety sector use a plethora of vinyl gloves throughout the course of a day, to create a barrier between the user and harmful germs or even just to keep their hands clean. However polyvinyl chloride (PVC), or commonly known as vinyl, is not an environmentally friendly substance and are commonly disposed of in their masses in landfill or through incineration. Due to its non-biodegradable nature vinyl gloves release toxic chemicals over time in landfill, leaching out causing soil and ground water contamination, as well as impacting on wild life (Stoessel & Smith, 2015).

Incineration of vinyl gloves is just as harmful to the environment as substances such as dioxin, hydrochloric acid and other toxic chemicals are dispersed into the air, water and soil as a result. Dioxin for example, is a human carcinogen having the potential to cause cancer and also a reproductive toxin which has an adverse effect on the reproductive systems of humans and animals that become exposed (World Health Organisation, 2014).

The impact of seemingly harmless, everyday vinyl gloves at the end of their life cycle is severe on the environment, due to their non-biodegradable nature. Companies opting to choose vinyl gloves for their cost effective option are continuing to promote their use while ignoring more expensive, yet biodegradable options. Vinyl gloves are an example of needless waste products grown out of the self-interest of companies purely to increase profits despite the damage they force upon the environment.

References

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2. Stoessel, K. and Smith, S. (2015). DOES THE GLOVE FIT? CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE SELECTION OF MEDICAL GLOVES. The Clinical Issue, [online] (Issue 4). Available at: www.halyardhealth.com/media/213510/c14219-clinical-issue-four-does-the-glove-fit.pdf [Accessed 13 May 2016].

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