CONSUMERS' GUIDE TO RESIN/RECYCLING CODES

The number-and-chasing-arrows symbol on the bottom of most plastic containers is a "resin code" that identifies the type of plastic used in a product. Consumers typically think of this as a recycling code. The following chart describes the general characteristics of these different plastic resins and the everyday products that typically carry these codes. Not all plastics are collected for recycling. Consumers should check with local authorities to determine what type of plastics recycling is available in their community.

Code	Chemical Name & Properties	Typical Consumer Home Use
	**Polyethylene Terephthalate – PET, PETE** PET is clear, strong and lightweight, with an optically smooth surface. Shatter-resistant. Provides an excellent barrier to oxygen, moisture and carbon dioxide. Good chemical resistance Also known as polyester.	Convenience-sized bottles for sodas, water, juice, sports drinks. Also used in bottles for shampoo, personal care products, salad dressing, etc., and jars for peanut butter and condiments. Some deli containers and microwavable food trays.
	**High Density Polyethylene (HDPE)** HDPE can be either unpigmented or pigmented. Excellent chemical resistance, high tensile strength, relatively stiff. Unpigmented HDPE bottles are translucent	Jugs for milk, cider and water (unpigmented HDPE). Bottles for liquid laundry detergent, fabric softener, bleach, household chemicals. (pigmented HDPE)
	**Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC, Vinyl)** PVC has good chemical resistance, weatherability; high impact strength; brilliant clarity. Vinyl products can be rigid or flexible.	Rigid packaging uses include blister packs and clamshells; bottles for salad dressing, vegetable oil and mouthwash. Flexible packaging includes shrink wrap, deli and meat wrap.
	**Low Density Polyethylene (LDPE)** LDPE is often used as a film, but also flexible packaging. It is tough, relatively transparent and flexible, with good acid/base resistance.	Dry cleaning bags, trash bags, produce and bread bags; shrink wrap Squeezable bottles; six-pack soda can rings.
	**Polypropylene (PP)** PP is strong, with excellent optical clarity, good chemical resistance, low moisture-vapor transmission and a high melting point . Used both as a film or in molded containers	Yogurt and margarine containers; takeout meals/deli foods; drinking straws; bottle caps and closures
	**Polystyrene (PS)** PS is a stiff plastic that can be rigid or foamed. General purpose polystyrene is clear, hard and brittle, with a relatively low melting point. Foamed applications are low density and have good moisture barrier and insulation properties.	Disposable cutlery, CD and DVD cases. Packaging peanuts, meat trays, cups, packaging for furniture and electronics. (foamed applications)
	**Other** Other plastics or products made with a combination of different plastic resins. Includes polycarbonate and bioplastics.	Various, depending on resin/resins used.