

FANTASTIC PLASTIC: FOOD WRAPPERS PARTY TRICKS

The inserts in boxes of chocolates that keep the chocolates in place are made of polymers. So are the inserts in other food packaging. Plastic vending cups are made of polystyrene, another polymer. These materials show a very unusual behaviour when heated.

Teacher demonstration

Your teacher will demonstrate an experiment to show what happens when some polymers are heated.

1. What do you see happen when your teacher heats up the insert from a box of chocolates?
2. What do you see when your teacher heats up a vending cup?
3. What do you see happen when your teacher heats up the polyethene rod and the epoxy rod?
4. Some polymers are called thermoplastics. Which polymers have you seen in this experiment that are thermoplastics?
5. Polymers that don't react to heat like thermoplastics are called thermosets. Why do you think that thermosets behave differently from thermoplastics when they are heated? Use the idea of strong bonds between molecules to help your explanation.



Do not touch the hot air gun, the hot plate or the heated plastic.

