

**WHEN WAS
THE LAST TIME
AN ASTEROID
HIT EARTH ?**

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00:00:02,429 --> 00:00:04,462

When Was the Last Time an Asteroid Hit Earth?

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00:00:08,406 --> 00:00:09,840

We Asked a NASA Scientist.

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00:00:09,840 --> 00:00:13,920

Well, the answer depends on whether you're asking about small or large impacts.

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00:00:13,920 --> 00:00:20,400

Because Earth gets hit all the time. But luckily for us, the vast majority of these impactors are

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00:00:20,400 --> 00:00:26,640

small and they just burn in the atmosphere. The most significant fireball event in over 100 years

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00:00:26,640 --> 00:00:32,240

occurred over Russia in 2013. We actually got hit by an asteroid that was the size of a small

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00:00:32,240 --> 00:00:37,440

building and that one disintegrated about 20 kilometers above the city of Chelyabinsk.

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00:00:37,440 --> 00:00:41,760

And it deposited a fair number of meteorites in the ground and I happen to have a piece of the

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00:00:41,760 --> 00:00:46,080

Chelyabinsk impactor right here in my hand. But what about big impacts,

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00:00:46,080 --> 00:00:51,440

the ones that leave craters tens of kilometers wide and cause huge amounts of devastation?

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00:00:51,440 --> 00:00:56,720

We have to go far back in time for such an event and those old craters are not easy to spot

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00:00:56,720 --> 00:01:02,185

because by now they're heavily eroded, they're filled with sediments, or they can be at the bottom of the ocean.

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00:01:02,185 --> 00:01:06,720

But to keep the long story short, small impacts, they happen all the time, especially

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00:01:06,720 --> 00:01:13,120

given that about 15,000 tons of space dust hit Earth every year. And large impacts are rare, and

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00:01:13,120 --> 00:01:18,000

we're talking millions of years rare. So, when was the last time an asteroid hit Earth?

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00:01:18,000 --> 00:01:22,371

Probably today, but the odds are it was very small and just burned in the atmosphere.