

PLASTICS: REDUCE & REUSE

Save \$\$\$ and the Planet



Plastics are everywhere! They are used in packaging, fashion, electronics, healthcare, automotive, food, telecommunications, construction, agriculture, and more. Some examples of common household products include:

- **Textiles** with polyester, nylon, spandex and other synthetic fibers: clothing, bedding, rugs and carpeting, and upholstered furniture.
- **Personal Care Products:** plastic bottles and tubes for hair care, lotions, toothpaste, and liquid hand soap, single-use razors, toothbrushes, cleansers, and nail polish.
- **Foodware & Packaging:** single use cutlery, plastic wrap, take-away containers, straws, single-use coffee cups, tea bags, Ziploc™ bags, produce, bakery and grocery bags, and plastic packaging such as candy wrappers, dairy containers, and chip bags.

Decreasing the purchase of plastic items and reusing them before disposal:

- Reduces the need for new, raw materials - reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Decreases your exposure to the chemical additives in plastic that may affect health
- Reduces the potential for plastic litter

There are many opportunities to reduce plastic use and choose reusable options, including:

- **Just say “NO” to plastics!** For example, don’t buy plastic toys or seasonal decorations
- **Avoid purchasing** food in plastic containers and bags whenever possible - choose items in glass or paper packaging or buy in bulk
- **Choose reusable options** over single-use disposable items
- **Keep** single-use plastics and reuse them
- **Repair** products such as clothing and appliances instead of buying new
- **Shop second-hand** stores to avoid creating demand for new products

- **Donate or sell** unwanted goods so they can be utilized by others

Reducing and reusing plastic items helps the planet and saves you \$\$\$!

STORING & HEATING FOOD


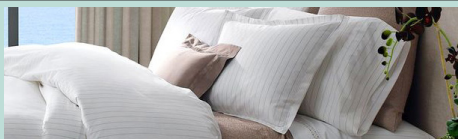
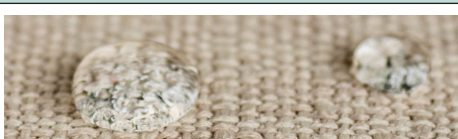
When food is stored in plastic, and especially when a plastic container is heated in the microwave, chemicals may leach from the plastic and enter the food. Some best practices for storing and heating food include:

- **Use glass or ceramic containers to store and heat food**
- If you must use plastic:
 - Let food cool before placing it in a plastic storage container
 - Follow the label instructions on microwave-safe containers
 - Avoid using plastics that are visibly damaged, stained or have an odor
 - Use for short-term, but not long-term food storage

ALTERNATIVES TO COMMON PLASTIC ITEMS

TEXTILES





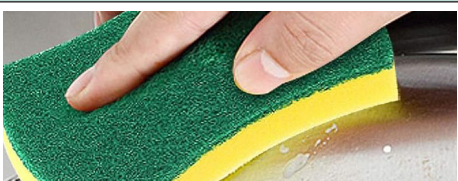
When textiles made of synthetic materials such as polyester, nylon, spandex, etc. are washed, they release microplastics into the wastewater. **To diminish the release of plastic fibers from your clothes and other textiles, only wash them when there is visible dirt or an odor!** Reducing the amount of laundry will save water, time, and \$\$\$!

PLASTIC ITEM		ALTERNATIVE
Clothing made with synthetic fibers such as polyester, nylon, and spandex		Choose naturally occurring fibers such as cotton, wool, linen, or silk
Bedding containing synthetic fibers such as polyester		Choose naturally occurring fibers such as cotton, wool, linen, or silk
Rugs and carpeting made with synthetic materials such as polyester or nylon		Opt for hard-wood flooring or choose rugs and carpet that are made of natural fibers such as wool

Shop for quality second-hand items and donate your used textiles in good condition to extend their life and keep them out of landfills.


CLEANING PRODUCTS

Switching to products listed as US EPA Safer-Choice can [www.epa.gov/saferchoice/products] diminish harmful chemical exposure.

PLASTIC ITEM		ALTERNATIVE
Laundry Detergent		Opt for a powdered laundry detergent in a cardboard container
Dryer sheets		Use 3 or 4 wool dryer balls to soften and fluff - plus their natural fibers diminish static
Bottled Multi-Purpose Cleaners		Choose a dry concentrated cleaning tablet that can be added to water to make new cleaner
Dishwasher Detergent		Use powdered dishwasher detergent in a cardboard container
Cleaning Sponges & Mops		Opt for reusable cleaning tools such as rags, mops with heads that can be laundered and sponges made with natural fibers

PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

Personal care products are purchased frequently and lead to large amounts of plastic waste. Some products contain plastic and release microplastics directly into the water stream.

PLASTIC ITEM		ALTERNATIVE
Shampoo and conditioner plastic containers		Try the solid bars of shampoo and conditioner - they work great!
Single-use razor		Choose a metal razor base with a replaceable blade
Toothbrush		Opt for a toothbrush body made of natural material like bamboo
Bodywash		Choosing a bar of soap eliminates the plastic container
Cleansers with plastic microbeads		Use a bar of soap or choose a cleanser that uses natural abrasives
Liquid hand soap		Choosing a bar of soap eliminates the plastic container
Nail polish		All nail polishes contain plastics, opt for a natural or buffed look!
Facial cleansing wipes and makeup wipes		Choose reusable cotton pads that can be washed and used again
Menstrual Products		Opt for paper- or non-applicator 100% cotton tampons, washable pads, or a reusable silicone cup/disc

When you stop using nail polish, you also eliminate the need for the toxic chemicals used to remove it - **reducing your exposure and improving your health!**

Consider taking fewer showers - most people don't need one every day. You'll save \$\$\$ on purchasing personal care products, reduce plastic use and waste, and save time and water!

REUSE YOUR DISPOSABLE PLASTICS

Reusing each disposable plastic item just **once** cuts the need for virgin single-use plastic ***in HALF***. Take single-use plastic items home to wash and reuse. The key is to let rinsed plastic items dry completely between uses.

- Refill a plastic water bottle instead of buying a new one
- Wash plastic bags and reuse them again and again until they start to leak
- Save plastic straws and utensils
 - Put a set in your bag and in your car to use when on-the-go!
- Reuse take-away containers with tight fitting lids for transporting food from home or for extra storage
 - When you eat out, bring your own container(s) so you can manage your leftovers without getting new containers

FOODWARE & PACKAGING

Many of these plastics are not recyclable and must be sent to landfill. For example, thin-film plastics clog the recycling equipment and should never be put in with your recycling.

PLASTICS ITEM		ALTERNATIVE
Single-use cutlery		Carry a reusable set of cutlery for meals on the go
Take-away containers		Try to eat-in instead of getting take-out and bring your own containers to manage your leftovers
Straws		Choose metal or silicone reusable straws - or simply go without
Single-use coffee cups		Bring your own and request that they use it - or plan to drink there and ask for a washable mug
Tea bags often contain plastic fibers		Choose loose leaf tea and use a tea strainer or choose a brand with natural fiber bags
Ziploc™ bags		Choose reusable silicone pouches (dishwasher friendly!) or reuse cleaned plastic bags you already have
Plastic cling wrap		Try beeswax wraps, a washable and reusable alternative!
Store, bakery and grocery bags		Bring reusable bags when shopping - keep some in your car
Plastic produce bags		Opt for reusable mesh bags - or simply go without

Reusable items might cost more to purchase, but will save you \$\$\$ over the long-run.

Many restaurants and grocery stores use plastic take-away containers that are not recyclable - such as those labeled #6 (PS). Advocate that they at least switch to plastic containers that are recyclable in your local system!

*For more information, visit www.newmoa.org/projects/plastics-in-consumer-products-food-service



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