

Reducing Plastic Use



A Community Brainstorm

Why is a Health Coach Moderating this Talk?



- What?
- Why?
- What happens if...?
- Focus on Action
- Support and Accountability
- Mindful Awareness and Planning
- Consistency not Perfection

The Good vs. The Bad

- **Pros:** Versatile, cheap, takes less energy to produce than the alternatives, and used for many medical needs: syringes, iv lines, intravenous bags, sterile packaging, materials for joint replacements and tissue engineering, and more.



- **Cons:** Human (and animal) exposure to endocrine disrupting bisphenol-A (BPA) and di-(2-ethylhexyl)-phthalate (DEHP), problems arising from the many tons of plastic trash, impact to marine environments and animals, and depletion of non-renewable petroleum resources.

8.3 Billion tonnes since the 1950s



Plastic Facts: History and Present Day

- Single use plastics make up 50 % of all plastics produced.
- **There are an estimated 5.25 Trillion individual plastic particles (269,000 tons) floating on or near the ocean's surface.**
- Plastics soak up pollutants from the surrounding seawater such that they are concentrated up to a million times. This toxicity is then delivered to whatever species eats the plastic particles.
- Only 9 % of plastics are recycled; 79% are thrown away. The remainder is incinerated.



Single-use plastics can last for hundreds of years



The Lifecycle of Plastics



Plastic bag
20 years



Coffee cup
30 years



Plastic straw
200 years



6-pack plastic rings
400 years



Plastic water bottle
450 years



Coffee pod
500 years



Plastic cup
450 years



Disposable diaper
500 years



Plastic toothbrush
500 years

“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference and you have to decide what kind of a difference you want to make.”
—Jane Goodall



Before we brainstorm, a mental exercise:

I want you to write down the first word that comes to mind for:

A color,

A piece of furniture,

A flower.

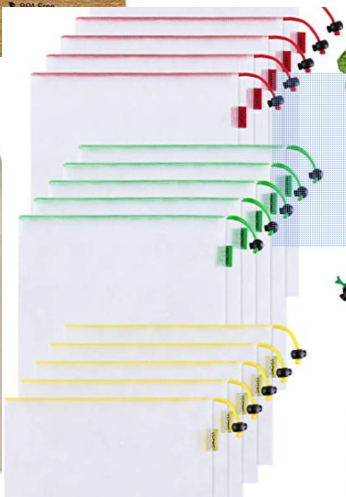
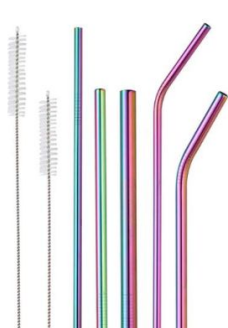
Respect, Kindness, Curiosity, Creativity, Patience



List the forms of plastic you use, within your control to change:







Tips from the Green Education Foundation



1. Stop using **plastic straws**, even in restaurants. If a straw is a must, purchase a reusable stainless steel or glass straw
2. Use a reusable **produce bag**. A single plastic bag can take 1,000 years to degrade. Purchase or make your own reusable produce bag and be sure to wash them often!
3. Give up gum. **Gum** is made of a synthetic rubber, aka plastic.
4. Buy **boxes instead of bottles**. Often, products like laundry detergent come in cardboard which is more easily recycled than plastic.
5. Purchase food, like cereal, pasta, and rice from **bulk bins** and fill a reusable bag or container. You save money and unnecessary packaging.
6. **Reuse containers** for storing leftovers or shopping in bulk.
7. Use a **reusable bottle or mug** for your beverages, even when ordering from a to-go shop
8. Bring your own container for **take-out** or your restaurant doggy-bag since many restaurants use styrofoam.
9. Use **matches** instead of disposable plastic lighters or invest in a **refillable metal lighter**.
10. **Avoid buying frozen foods** because their packaging is mostly plastic. Even those that appear to be cardboard are coated in a thin layer of plastic. Plus you'll be eating fewer processed foods!
11. **Don't use plasticware** at home and be sure to request restaurants do not pack them in your take-out box.
12. Ask your local grocer to take your **plastic containers** (for berries, tomatoes, etc.) back. If you shop at a farmers market they can refill it for you.
13. The EPA estimates that 7.6 billion pounds of **disposable diapers** are discarded in the US each year. Use cloth diapers to reduce your baby's carbon footprint and save money.
14. Make **fresh squeezed juice or eat fruit** instead of buying juice in plastic bottles. It's healthier and better for the environment.
15. **Make your own cleaning products** that will be less toxic and eliminate the need for multiple plastic bottles of cleaner.
16. Pack your lunch in **reusable containers** and bags. Also, opt for fresh fruits and veggies and bulk items instead of products that come in single serving cups.
17. Use a **razor with replaceable blades** instead of a disposable razor

What could take the place of plastic for each of those?

(Heidi Bischof)

Straws: Metal, Bamboo, Silicone Straws

Stirrers: Wooden sticks, spoon from home

Cups and plates: Speak to your favorite restaurant owners and request they change to more compostables, carry glassware.

Grocery Bags: cloth or paper bags

Ziploc Bags: Silicone alternatives!

Plastic bottles for drinking water, soda: Metal or glass water bottles

To go containers, plastic wrapping for food: Bring your own tupperware for to go leftovers. Beeswax cloth for covering.

Dental flossers: dental floss

Balloons: Spinners.

Disposable shaver: Reuseable with replaceable blades

Plastic Floss: Silk or bamboo floss

Plastic Ribbons, Bows, etc. for gift wrapping:

Jute string or raffia

Plastic Tape: Masking tape, jute string, staples, eco-friendly glue, removable adhesive

Plastic Cable Ties: metal wire, jute string

Disposable gloves: if not in the medical industry, then reusable gloves!

Single Serve yoghurt: get the bigger container, make your own.

Plastic Wrap: Silicone wraps (reusable alternative to cling-wrap) or beeswax wrap.

Plastic Grocery bags: Cloth bags, Paper Bags

Plastic produce bags: Cloth or mesh alternatives

Trash can liners: [Plant Based LINers](#)

Plastic Packaging

Plastic toothbrush: wooden or compostable toothbrush

Anatomy of a Habit

Cue-Routine-Reward (Duhigg)

- Get curious about your routines and habits
- Notice your patterns
- Experiment with changing what is within your control
- Make it easier to do the habit you want; harder to do the habit you want to stop.



Set Three Goals

S - specific

M - measureable

A - action oriented

R - realistic

T - time oriented

Sources

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Thank you!

