

## PLASTIC LESS JULY 2019

**Today is the 1st day of Plastic Free July.** Tip of the Day: Keep your reusables on hand (like having your shopping bags in the boot of your car or by the door and keeping your coffee cup or drink bottle in your bag).

### **Plastic Free July. Day 2, Tip 2: Avoid cling wrap**

There are several alternatives to plastic cling wrap that you can use to reduce plastic pollution. Storing and packing food in reusable containers is a great start. You can also purchase reusable silicone bowl toppers to cover food in bowls, pots and pans, or even get crafty with an upside-down plate, reusable cloth cover or wax wrap.

Wax wraps and containers make a great, reusable alternative for wrapping sandwiches. You can also buy reusable washable cloth bags to store and pack food in, as a better option to zip lock bags

It goes beyond your own home, though; you can make an impact by avoiding food that's pre-packed in cling wrap and choosing an alternative product instead. I've been seeing a lot more produce not wrapped in plastic at the grocery store. Or you can shop the farmer's market.

The positive impacts of avoiding cling wrap:

Reduce plastic waste and the use of our natural resources in creating it.

Prevent the chance of lightweight cling wrap blowing into our natural surroundings, where it will stay forever.

Protect our wildlife who can mistake plastic as food.

### **Plastic Free July 2019. Day 3, Tip 3: Choose to refuse single-use plastic straws.**

How can you do it

If you're able to, request your cold drink is made without a single-use plastic straw. It's important that you state this before your drink is made; if the straw is already in there when it's brought to you, it'll likely become plastic waste anyway.

For those with accessibility issues or who prefer straws, you can also bring your own sustainable alternatives. There are stainless steel, bamboo, and glass options available on the market, and even foldable reusable straws that you can easily keep in your purse or pocket.

Taking the next steps

Going beyond refusing single-use straws, you can also encourage and support businesses to only provide straws when requested, rather than as a default. You can connect them to [thelaststraw.com](http://thelaststraw.com) to source posters and help them find out more about sourcing alternatives to plastic straws.

You can also encourage schools, day care centers, and other child-minding communities you may be involved with to rethink the use of plastic straws in arts and crafts.

The impact

Single-use straws are used for a few minutes then discarded, where they'll remain in the environment indefinitely

They are lightweight and easily blown down drains and into waterways, rivers and oceans

Straws can become stuck in the airways of animals, or if mistaken for food and ingested can be fatal. Together, we can get straws out of the top 10 list of items collected in beach cleanups

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#### **Plastic Free July 2019 - Day 4, Tip 4:**

Choose to refuse single-use shopping bags

How can you do it:

Reusable shopping bags are a fantastic alternative to single-use plastic bags. It's a great idea to keep a stash of your reusable bags somewhere where you'll remember them; like in the boot of your car or by your front door. You can also get into the habit of writing a reminder to yourself at the start of each grocery shopping list.

Reusable bags go beyond just grocery shopping – bring them along for all shopping trips! There are even purse/pocket sized reusable bags that you can keep on hand for emergencies.

Taking the next steps:

To make an even greater impact, consider making your own reusable shopping bags using repurposed fabric.

If you chose to buy, make sure to choose bags that are made from natural fibers such as such ethically produced cotton, jute, or hemp or recycled plastic bottles.

For those living in places that have not banned the plastic bag yet, get involved with a local advocacy group and petition your governing body to make a change!

Contact Earth Action if you are interested in helping with this!

The impact

Plastic is fatal for animals who mistake it for food or become entangled in it.

Plastic bags break up into tiny micro plastics and remain indefinitely in the environment.

By choosing to refuse plastic bags, you can save around 500 plastic bags per year from entering our oceans and landfill.

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### **Plastic LESS July - Day 5, Tip 5:**

Choose to refuse single-use takeaway cups

How can you do it:

You can easily avoid takeaway coffee cups by bringing along your own reusable alternative. There are many reusable coffee cups available on the market. Keep it in your bag or on your desk at work; wherever you'll remember to use it.

Many people choose socially, and environmentally friendly reusables made of ceramic, glass, or stainless steel.

You don't even need to purchase a special cup. You can bring a mug or jar from home – just be conscious of using items that can heat up or don't travel well if you're going far.

If you forget your reusable alternative and don't have time to dine-in, consider going without. It might not be easy but will probably mean you never forget again!

Taking the next steps:

Spread the word about reusable coffee cups with your friends, family members and colleagues, especially if you go out for coffee runs with them.

You can also encourage and support cafes to become a part of the Responsible Cafe network. ([responsiblecafes.org](http://responsiblecafes.org))

The impact:

Coffee cups are not recyclable in most locations. Even 'compostable' cups are rarely composted as they require very specific facilities and conditions

Bringing your own cup shows others how easy it is to reduce their waste and creates a new trend.

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### **Plastic Less July. Day 6, Tip 6:**

Choose to refuse pre-packed fruit and vegetables.

How you can do it

Buying plastic-wrapped or packaged fruits and vegetables can be convenient, but unfortunately it creates plastic waste. Instead, look out for loose fruit and vegetables in your local grocery store, or head to a farmer's market or organic store where plastic packaging is less often used.

Choose lightweight, reusable produce bags instead of the plastic bags that are usually provided. Be sure to look for ones made from recycled plastic or repurposed netting fabric.

It's also worth asking if you really need a plastic bag. For example, if you're buying a bunch of bananas, why not just keep them loose in your shopping basket and transport them home in your reusable shopping bag?

## Taking the next steps

Support stores that provide loose fruit and vegetables or offer paper bags instead of plastic ones. If your local store doesn't do this, why not share your concerns and request they reduce their plastic packaging.

## The impact

Avoiding plastic-wrapped fruit and vegetables reduces the pressure on recycling systems.

It also reduces unnecessary waste and saves precious resources.

You can help save plastic bags from entering our oceans and landfill where they break up into tiny micro plastics and remain forever.

Plastic is also fatal for animals who mistake it for food or become entangled in it.

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### **Plastic Less July. Day 7, Tip 7:**

Conduct a bin audit to discover all the 'waste' that could be avoided, recycled or composted.

How you can do it:

Whether at home or in your workplace, bin audits are a great way to understand waste you're creating and discover any confusion about the alternatives. For example, if your bin audit shows that family members or co-workers are putting cardboard in the landfill bin, you can check to see if there is a service for it to be recycled.

Getting Set up:

If you're at work gather together a team of colleagues who are keen to conduct a bin audit. It's a much quicker and more fruitful process if conducted with a few people. Otherwise, at home, you can tackle the task by yourself or get the other members of your household involved.

Pick a day not long after your bins have just been emptied (you don't want to rummage through week-old waste). Make sure that you've given enough time for the bins to collect waste, but not too long that it's started to go putrid.

Find a location that's sheltered, has good airflow and is easy to clean. Make sure that the waste won't blow away in the wind, too.

Source some tarpaulin/waterproof cloth from a friend, neighbor, or colleague. Optional: gather some buckets and scales to calculate the volume and weight of the waste you audit.

Draw a table so you can keep a record of the waste you find. You may find you just need two columns: Category of waste and weight/volume. However, it's always handy to prompt yourself to write the date, who helped with the audit, and what type of bin you were auditing (compost, general waste, recycling).

Find some gloves (preferably washable) so that your hands stay clean.

On the day:

Gather your trash bin/s. Separate them by type (this may be compost, recycling, general waste but it depends on the separation system in your home or workplace).

Start with one type of trash and empty it all onto the tarpaulin/waterproof cloth.

Separate the trash into piles. For example, you may separate the general waste bin into batteries, paper, food, plastic bottles, plastic cutlery, soft plastic, cans, cardboard, glass.

Estimate the volume or percentage of waste in each pile (or accurately weigh if you have scales) and write this in your table.

If you have other bins, repeat this process with them, then clean up.

Taking the next steps:

Once you've audited your bin, there's a lot of useful information that can come from it. Start by taking note of the "low hanging fruit"; in other words, things that you can change quickly and still make a big impact.

Focus on those one or two items and figure out how you can improve. It might be eliminating a certain item or product that ends up in your waste a lot or sourcing a local recycling center for items that can't go in the regular recycling bins.

Set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-based) goals to reduce each item found in your bin audit. Reflect on these goals on a regular basis and conduct a bin audit every 6 or 12 months to track your progress.

The Impact:

Reduce waste that needs collecting and reduce transport pollution.

Engage with family members or employees on their waste, helping them to share specific behaviors they can change.

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### **Plastic Less July. Day 8, Tip 8:**

Choose to refuse plastic bin liners. That includes 'reusing' plastic bags, because unfortunately they end up in landfill as well.

How can you do it: There are some great alternatives to plastic bin liners and bags, including:

Lining the bin with a few sheets of newspaper

Using certified compostable bin liner bags

Using the bin as a 'naked bin', and simply washing it out as needed

If you do use a 'naked bin', you can ward against extra smells by:

Wrapping the "icky" stuff in newspaper first

Freezing 'wet' scraps (in paper or a reusable container) until bin day

Home composting food scraps

Taking the next steps:

To lessen the need for bin liners altogether, why not aim for as little waste as possible? You can start by avoiding plastic packaging, recycling, and composting to reduce rubbish as much as possible.

For those who can, having some pet chickens could be a good solution too. They'll eat most food scraps.

Many local councils also hold Compost, Bokashi, Worm Farm or Chicken Workshops which are worthwhile heading along to. If yours doesn't? Ask them why not!

The impact:

Plastic bags break up into micro pieces that easily blow into nature and, if mistaken for food and ingested, can be fatal to animals

Plastic remains forever in landfill and reducing the use of plastic bin liners helps counteract this.

Composting helps food scraps deteriorate instead of producing methane from anaerobic landfill.

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**Plastic Less July. Day 9, Tip 9:**

Choose to refuse single-use plastic cutlery, plates and takeaway containers.

How can you do it:

If you're going to be getting takeaway and eating it on the go, pack a set of reusable cutlery to take with you. It doesn't have to be a special set – just a regular knife and fork from your home wrapped in a cloth, pouch, or container will work. You can also get lightweight bamboo cutlery or a spork (knife/fork/spoon all in one) designed specifically for taking with you.

For times when you're taking food back to your home or office, let the restaurant or cafe know that you don't need cutlery. Most delivery services allow you to add a note saying the same thing, too.

As for takeaway containers, some restaurants and cafes allow people to bring their own containers from home. If you have a favorite go-to for takeaway, it's worth finding out if they'll let you bring a reusable alternative.

Taking the next steps:

To go a step further, you can encourage and support businesses to rethink and reduce single-use plastics. Let them know about reusable alternatives they can use instead or ask them to consider welcoming customers who bring their own containers.

You can also encourage schools, childcare centers, your workplace, and other establishments you're connected with to rethink their use of plastic cutlery and takeaway containers.

The impact:

Single-use cutlery is used for a few minutes and discarded to remain in the environment forever. Even compostable cutlery has its limitations.

By choosing to refuse single-use cutlery and takeaway containers, you can help set a precedent for sustainable alternatives and show how easy it can be.

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### **Plastic Less July: Day 10, Tip 10**

Choose to refuse single-use plastic drink bottles

How you can do it:

Avoiding buying single-use plastic water bottles is as simple as carrying your own reusable alternative with you. Be sure to choose a socially responsible and environmentally friendly alternative, such as a reusable bottle made from stainless steel, glass, or safe aluminum.

If you do forget to bring your water bottle along with you, don't panic. You can find a fountain, ask a cafe for a glass of water, or purchase a glass bottle of water and reuse it.

Taking the next steps:

Go further with your impact by encouraging and supporting businesses to provide refillable water stations.

You can also talk to school campuses about rethinking selling bottled water to their students.

And finally, don't underestimate the impact of writing to your local government. Ask them to ban single-use plastic and hold manufacturers accountable by implementing extended producer responsibility schemes.

The impact:

Reduce the pollution produced by plastic water bottles, which end up in landfills and impact millions of animals and habitats

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### **Plastic Less July. Day 11, Tip 11:**

Reduce what you buy. Before you make a purchase, ask yourself if you truly need it, or if you can repurpose other items that you already have. Shopping for secondhand clothing and products helps contribute to less waste. Avoid products that are wrapped in plastic and seek more sustainable alternatives.

Reuse plastic items as much as possible or take to a secondhand store where possible so they don't end up in landfill.

Recycle correctly and choose to buy recycled products to close the loop.

Learn about the process and impacts of our production and consumption patterns, and the role of recycling, at the Story of Stuff (20 minutes).

How you can do it:

Before you make a purchase, ask yourself 3 simple questions:

Do I need this?

Is there an option with less plastic packaging?

Is there an alternative made from recycled materials?

Be aware that recycling rules may change and aren't necessarily always the 'best' option. In other words, 'reduce' should still be your top priority. In saying that, you can still work towards becoming an expert recycler using these tips:

Find out what's recyclable in your area

Check the rules for recycling in your area (e.g. which items to separate, rinse or take to a specialist collection point)

Ask what can and can't go in your recycling bins (for example, many recycling systems can't take old toys, clothing, scrap metal or some types of plastic)

Taking the next steps:

We've become a plastic product, or products wrapped in plastic packaging. You can be part of the solution to get out of this mentality, by actively choosing to avoid single-use plastic products.

If you can't recycle items in your municipal system, search for special recycling companies near you such as TerraCycle or REDcycle.

You can also support campaigns for:

Local and onshore recycling facilities, to reduce the pollution caused by transporting goods

Governments to regulate manufacturers to minimize packaging and use sustainable materials

Governments holding manufacturers accountable by implementing extended producer responsibility schemes

The impact:

All the oil, water and other resources used to make products is wasted if those products aren't recycled.

By reducing, reusing, and recycling, you can help minimize landfill waste

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### **Plastic Less July. Day 12, Tip 12**

Choose to refuse single-use plastics in your workplace's kitchen.

How you can do it:

To begin with, do an inventory of all the single-use plastic items found in your workplace's kitchen. You may be surprised by just how many there are! These include plastic cutlery, plastic plates, bowls and

cups, bin bags, biscuit packets, teabags, and water bottles. Keep this list for future reference – in a few weeks/months it may serve as a reminder of all the impact you've had.

After your list is complete, start by choosing one item and thinking of an easy alternative. There's plenty of information on our website about reusable alternatives, or a friend, colleague or family member may have ideas.

Try and avoid replacing single-use plastics for single-use cardboard, bamboo or "compostable plastic". Instead, swap items for reusable alternatives, such as ceramic mugs, stainless steel cutlery and glass cups.

Once you've got everyone used to one change, start the conversation about picking another item. Through this method, you can slowly make your way towards a plastic free kitchen at work!

Taking the next steps:

If you want to drive change in your workplace kitchen even further, there are a few things you can do.

One great idea is adding a compost bin to your kitchen. Make sure you create a roster to ensure it's emptied on a regular basis (and not always by you!). Some workplaces have staff take food waste home for their own composting, and some set up a compost bin outside of the office if there's room.

You can also set up a collection point to help colleagues separate soft plastics (bread bags, plastic bags, biscuit wrappers) and periodically take them to a soft plastics recycling location.

It's worth auditing the bins in the kitchen as well (see our card on bin audits). Get a team together to separate out the contents of each bin, then ensure everyone is aware of what should go into what bin. This may require labelling on the bins, placing signs nearby with explanations, and running an information session.

The impact:

Reduce hundreds or even thousands of single-use plastic items by making simple switches in the kitchen.

Reduce pressure on recycling systems.

Reduce unnecessary waste and save precious resources.

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### **Plastic Less July. Day 13, Tip 13:**

Get the people you work with involved with Plastic Free/Less July.

How you can do it:

Work can be a great place to get people involved in Plastic Free July. The people you see every day often become your tribe; people you workshop problems with and help keep on track during trying times. What better challenge to embrace together than reducing plastic pollution?

The best, simplest place to start is by telling people about Plastic Free July and inviting them to join the challenge with you. You don't have to send an all staff email; just start small with a few co-workers and watch it build from there.

Many workplaces begin by having a plastic free morning tea or bake-off, to raise awareness and start the conversation. Food is a fantastic way to draw a community together, and help you get the ball rolling.

When beginning these conversations around plastic pollution, keep it positive. Focus on the solutions and not on the problems – people are much happier to join in that way. You can also check out our case studies for more in-depth information on how others have succeeded in getting their workplaces to reduce single-use plastics.

Taking the next steps:

Once a few colleagues have become engaged, you may be able to build on that momentum. You can get more people on board by sharing “easy wins” that they can incorporate, such as bringing a reusable coffee cup to the cafe each morning and transporting their lunch in reusable containers rather than plastic wrap.

You can also reach out to local not for profits who are tackling the issue of plastic pollution and invite them to share their story with your workplace. This can be an inspiring and engaging way of learning more about the problem and the solutions.

DIY Come and Try workshops can also be a lot of fun. By hosting a class on how to make wax wraps, soap, toothpaste, deodorant, etc., people can feel inspired to buy less and DIY more.

The impact:

Many of your co-workers will bring these new skills home, encouraging friends and family members to get on board. That means impacts will reach beyond the office.

When workers reduce their own plastics at work, it's a small step to start looking at alternatives to the plastics that the organization buys. For example, your company may be able to eliminate disposable cups, avoid individually wrapped mints, and provide cups and containers to workers or clients.

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#### **Plastic Less July. Day 14, Tip 14.**

Investigate your workplace's procurement practices and reduce the amount of single-use plastics used.

How you can do it:

Start off by finding your workplace's procurement procedure. This may be a simple document that outlines the basics, such as which providers to use and how much can be spent before certain procedures must be followed. It could be more complex, highlighting ethical requirements of suppliers.

After learning more about the procedures in place, gather together key procurement people in a meeting. Try and ensure someone with decision making authority is on the team, or at least aware of the initiative.

With the team, explore amending the procurement procedure to include some of the following:

Do we really need to procure this single-use plastic item?

Can it be procured without single-use plastic packaging?

Can the same item be made from recycled content, thus closing the loop?

Can packaging be reduced by buying in bulk?

If your workplace has a sustainability officer, add:

Can we do more by checking with the sustainability officer before purchasing.

When putting together the list to discuss, consider simple items that your workplace obtains on a regular basis and discuss whether you can reduce packaging. This could include:

switching to loose-leaf tea and coffee in a plunger (or a machine that grinds beans itself) in the kitchen.

Sourcing stationary not made of plastic or wrapped in plastic (e.g. wooden pencils rather than plastic clicker pencils, and cardboard or refillable pens rather than plastic pens).

Taking the next steps:

With the procurement team on board, you can discuss with them whether sourcing new suppliers is possible. Perhaps there's a supplier you can use that's more aware of the dangers of plastic packaging and makes a conscious effort to reduce packaging.

The Impact:

For everyone bin-full of waste generated, 70 bin-fulls was generated upstream in making it. That means it's exceptionally important to reduce waste through good procurement practices.

Practical sustainability initiatives help staff to live their values and make workplaces more rewarding to work in.

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### **Plastic Less July. Day 15, Tip 15.**

Choose to refuse pre-packed bread, rolls and baked goods.

How you can do it:

Most local bakeries, farmers markets and even supermarkets have sections with freshly baked goods that are yet to be packaged. By heading along with your own reusable bread bag or containers, you can easily avoid single-use plastic packaging.

If you forget to bring your own, you can also ask for a paper bag (which you can recycle later if clean, or compost or shred and feed to the worm farm).

Taking the next steps:

Bringing your own reusable containers and produce bags to do your grocery shopping helps sets a precedent that shows people just how easy it can be to avoid single-use plastic.

The impact:

By reducing your use of single-use plastic, you'll help save precious resources.

You'll also help save plastic bags from entering our oceans and landfill, where they break up into tiny micro plastics and remain forever.

Plastic is also fatal for animals who mistake it for food or become entangled in it.

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### **Plastic Less July. Day 16, Tip 16**

Choose to refuse pre-packaged meat, fish and deli products, particularly those sold on polystyrene trays. (OR just become a vegan or vegetarian).

How can you do it:

It's worth shopping around for a local butcher, fishmonger or deli-counter who sell unpackaged items. Just remember to bring your own reusable container along when you go shopping.

Taking the next steps:

Beyond that, you can encourage and support businesses to offer meat, fish and deli items that are unpackaged. You can also talk to them about alternatives to plastic packaging, or direct them to the Plastic Free July website for them to find helpful resources.

Supporting campaigns calling for single-use plastics (including polystyrene) to be banned can also go a long way.

The impact:

By refusing plastic-wrapped meat, fish, and deli products, you can help reduce unnecessary waste and save precious resources.

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### **Plastic Less July. Day 17, Tip 17.**

**STOP using Styrofoam!**

Though it has many uses and benefits, Styrofoam, a brand name for polystyrene foam, takes a hefty toll on the environment. Estimates vary for the breakdown of Styrofoam from a few years to as much as 1 million, depending on environmental conditions. Because of the harm this solid waste causes to the environment, many places have banned the petroleum-based material.

Chemical Stability

In Styrofoam, atoms are bonded to one another strongly, making it very stable. Because of this stability, the plastic repels water, and resists acids, bases, salts and other corrosive substances. It is non-toxic. It

has a long shelf life, making it convenient and cost-effective for businesses. It doesn't grow mold or bacteria, so it stays sanitary in storage, and helps keep food safe. The downside to Styrofoam's chemical stability is, once in the environment, it can remain for generations.

#### Modes of Breakdown

Although it resists most chemicals, Styrofoam is sensitive to sunlight in a process called photodegradation, or "breakdown by light." Over months, continual exposure to sunlight affects the outer layer of the plastic, discoloring it and turning it into a powdery substance. Because of this action, thin Styrofoam packaging can break down in a few years. Inside a landfill and shielded from light, however, no such breakdown takes place. In addition to photodegradation, a process called leaching can occur when the plastic becomes excessively hot. Under these conditions, tiny amounts of styrene can seep out of the plastic and contaminate anything packaged in it.

#### Million-Year Lifespan

Styrofoam is commonly used in disposable products that are only used once. These products can persist in the environment for more than a million years, however, since polystyrene is not biodegradable. Though it is slow to break down chemically, Styrofoam does however fragment into small pieces, choking animals that ingest it, clogging their digestive systems. Styrofoam and other plastics currently make up about 30 percent of the landfill volume in the United States.

#### Styrofoam Alternatives

Some restaurants and food vendors have substituted cardboard and paper products for Styrofoam in cups, fast food "clamshells" and other food packaging. Especially in the presence of moisture, paper fibers break down within weeks to months. Biodegradable alternatives such as "soap stock waste" from agricultural operations can replace Styrofoam for protecting packages, and recycled paper can be used for cups, eliminating some Styrofoam waste.

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#### **Plastic Free July: Day 18, Tip 18 information Sharing.**

It can be tough trying to do the right thing. This article helps break down the different "types" of plastics you might see when trying to make the right choice. Hope it helps!

<https://ensia.com/features/bioplastics-bio-based-biodegradable-environment/?fbclid=IwAR3fPISh-QJJuwK6Js05Gcx4TcNWz5XZ6JFxBmNuNSvyEeTJ1TgQxPhLZA>

#### **Plastic Less July. Day 19, Tip(s)19.**

- Start making your own cleaning products with ingredients you most likely have in your cupboard already – such as bicarb soda, lemons, and vinegar.
- Swap out shower gel, shampoo, conditioner and more for bars of soap. Go a step further and check the soap ingredients to ensure they don't contain palm oil and find products that use sustainable packaging. (I'll be sharing how to make your own toothpaste soon).
- Make your dental care regime plastic-free. From bamboo toothbrushes to dental floss made from silk thread, there are plenty of great alternatives out there.

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**Plastic Less July, Day 20, Tip 20.**

Choose to refuse long life cartons.

How you can do it:

There are usually glass bottle alternatives to cartons of milk, stock, juices, and flavored milk. Stock and juice can often be quite easily be made yourself at home (and with far less preservatives!).

Some people switch to using milk in powder form, which is packaged in metal tins. Make it up the night before, put it in the fridge, and you're all set!

Taking the next steps:

As well as making your own juice and stocks, people who are handy in the kitchen can also think about making their own nut, oat, and rice milk.

To go one step even further, having a pet goat can help you bypass the need to buy milk at all! Another great thing about goats is that they'll eat many food scraps, helping you cut down on waste even further.

It's important to get behind campaigns that encourage the government to:

Implement extended producer responsibility schemes

Make manufacturers be held accountable for their packaging

The impact:

By refusing long-life cartons, you're reducing resources sent to landfill

Choosing to drink water over cartons of juice and flavored milk is a great healthy alternative

Making your own stock is a great way to use up your veggie scraps, instead of wasting them

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**Plastic Less July, Day 21, Tip 21**

Did you know that it takes 450 years for disposable diapers to decompose?

Choose not to use disposable diapers or minimize your use of them.

How can you do it:

Reusable diapers are obviously the preferred choice for sustainability. Check to see if there is a diaper washing service near you.

Many people have switched to cloth inserts inside a durable outer diaper, combining the leak-proof elastic of a disposable with the sustainability of washable cloth.

Before choosing a 'compostable' or 'biodegradable' disposable diaper, consider that they will not biodegrade in landfill and so will need industrial composting to be sustainable.

Another option is to use both! Many parents minimize use reusable diapers when at home or during the night and restrict their use of disposable diapers to when they're out and about.

Taking the next steps:

Reducing waste doesn't have to stop with diapers. Wipes can easily be switched out with something as simple as washable cloths and water.

When buying reusable diapers, avoid 'flushable' liners that are often sold with them.

You can also investigate lobbying 'compostable/ biodegradable' diaper manufacturers to set up or support the industrial composting that is required to handle these products.

The impact:

By choosing reusable over disposable, you'll save approximately 6000 diapers from landfill per child.

Disposable diapers go into the landfill bin, not the recycling bin. By remembering this, you'll help reduce the number of diapers that contaminate recycling.

By avoiding 'flushable' liners, you can be sure to not block the sewage system.

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### **Plastic Less July. Day 22, Tip 22.**

Choose to refuse plastic-packaged bathroom supplies, including shower gel.

How you can do it:

Making the switch from shower gel to bars of soap is an easy way to reduce consumption of single-use plastics. Bar soaps come in different blends to suit body washing, face wash, shampoo and shaving, so your line-up of bottles may become a line-up of bars.

Some people also go one step further and check the ingredients of the soap to ensure they don't contain palm oil, which contributes to deforestation.

Bar soap can often be purchased without packaging, especially in bulk food, health, and organic stores. Alternatively, many suppliers use cardboard to package their soap which can be thrown in the compost once used.

Taking the next steps:

Making your own soap is easy to do and is a rewarding way to avoid waste. There are plenty of recipes online, and once you've got the hang of it you can start experimenting with different scents and ingredients.

There may also be events in your local community sharing how to make your own soap. If there's not, it might be a great opportunity for you to share your soap recipes!

The impact:

Enjoy a simpler bathroom routine.

Reduce plastic waste and the use of our natural resources in creating it.

Protect our wildlife who can mistake plastic as food.

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### **Plastic Less July. Day 23, Tip 23.**

Choose to refuse balloons and other single-use plastic party decorations.

How you can do it:

With a little bit of creativity, you can easily plan a party that's free from balloons and other harmful single-use plastics. Popular decorations that can be reused time and time again, include bunting, tassels, tissue pom poms, lanterns, fresh flowers, and more.

Having a theme for your party can help you to draw inspiration for making your own, borrowing or buying reusable party decorations.

With crafting making a comeback, many people find it easy and fun to make decorations from old fabric and scrap paper, too.

Friends and neighbors are a great source of reusable decorations or materials for that home-made creation. Before buying anything, simply put the word out and see what you can borrow.

Many people use Facebook for finding decorations. Local groups might have a bank of decorations available to share amongst the community.

Taking the next steps:

Your zero waste, plastic-free event is a great way to inspire others to celebrate without balloons and other harmful decorations.

As the alternatives catch on you can start to advocate for your community to join those that already ban the release of balloons. You can add your voice to a local boycott group or start a petition at your school, workplace, club, or neighborhood.

This is a great time to switch to popular alternatives to other single-use plastic party items, such as:

Swapping glitter for confetti made from dried leaves.

Choosing paper bags by sourcing treats from the bulk food store, or make gifts of crayons, chalk, seeds, plants, secondhand books, and homemade playdough.

Disposable cups / plates / cutlery is easily replaced by reusable items borrowed from neighbors or friends. People who have a lot of parties often invest in reusable bamboo sets.

Choosing to refuse single-use plastic water bottles can be as simple as filling a water jug or dispenser from the tap.

Opting for paper straws or reusable ones made from metal, glass, or bamboo.

The impact:

Celebrating without disposable plastics is a great way to empower others to care:

Plastics, including balloons and glitter, are easily blown down drains, into rivers and our ocean where they remain in the environment forever, even 'biodegradable' latex balloons.

Balloons are a choking hazard and can be fatal to children and animals.

Helium is a precious resource, needed for medical procedures, so it's important to save it wherever possible.

#PlasticLessJuly #PlasticPreventionCoalition #EarthEthics

### **Plastic Less July. Day 24, Tip 24.**

Did you know it takes Sanitary Pads 500-800 years to decompose?

Choose to refuse single-use tampons and pads.

How you can do it:

These days, there are many reusable alternatives to single-use sanitary items. This includes the increasingly popular menstrual cups, which are made by numerous brands and can be purchased online and in many health stores and chemists.

These cups are inserted like a tampon, and typically need to be emptied and cleaned out a couple of times a day.

Period underwear and washable cotton pads and liners are also reusable alternatives, again with many brands available to choose from. These work more like pads and can all be washed in the washing machine.

Taking the next steps:

Choosing natural materials, and avoiding plastic-based products such as microfiber, for reusable pads ensures a totally plastic free solution. There are also a range of social enterprise and ethical online stores that ensure sustainability benefits beyond reducing your plastic use.

The impact

The packaging used for applicators, tampons, and sanitary pads all contain single-use plastics. A huge number of these are flushed down the toilet, blocking sewerage pipes and wastewater treatment plants.

Reduce the impact to wildlife by choosing to refuse these items. They can end up in our rivers and oceans and cause ingestion issues for animals.

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### **Plastic Less July. Day 25, Tip 25.**

Make your own personal care products!

Did you know that personal items come in single use plastic containers? Most containers can't be or aren't recycled. Buy a glass jar or tin for storing your homemade goods. Not only are homemade goods

not using plastic on the inside, but there isn't any plastic on the inside (ingredients)! There are also no fillers, metals, or other harmful chemicals.

## DEODORANT

Recipe 1 Ingredients: 1-part baking soda 6 parts corn flour Instructions: Mix in a reusable and resealable container. Close the container and shake vigorously for about 1 minute to thoroughly mix the two powders. Dab a small amount on the skin of your armpits with a soft cloth, cotton ball or cosmetic applicator.

Recipe 2 Ingredients: ½ cup baking soda ½ cup corn flour A few drops of tea tree oil 2 whole bay leaves Instructions: Combine. Moisten underarms or apply before drying after a shower. Pat on with a cotton ball or sprinkle on a wet washcloth.

Recipe 3 Ingredients: 1-part corn flour 1-part baking soda Coconut oil Instructions: Combine corn flour and baking soda (start with ¼ cup of each). Then as much coconut oil as necessary to get the substance you desire. It is best to heat the coconut oil a bit first. Add your preferred oil.

#PlasticLessJuly #PlasticPollutionCoalition #EarthEthics

### **Plastic Less July, Day 26, Tip 26.**

Before you buy, stop and think about the low or no waste options.

How you can do it

People making smarter decisions when shopping show that it can have a huge impact and is not too difficult.

Considering the packaging of the item is a good place to start to 'buy less'. Thinking about potential alternatives can include choosing the item with the least amount of packaging, switching from plastic to paper packaging, or even choosing loose product with no packaging at the grocers or a bulk food store.

For reusable products it's better to purchase something that's designed to last forever than it is to purchase something that will need replacing regularly.

Taking the next steps

There's a changing attitude towards buying new items. Many people now take the approach of asking themselves, 'do I really need this? Or do I already have something that will serve the same purpose? Can I borrow it from a friend or family member instead of buying it brand new?'

'Buy nothing' groups on Facebook can be a great resource for swapping a new purchase for a borrowed item eliminating the need to buy unnecessary items or choosing to shop for secondhand items can reduce waste going to landfills (and save you some money!).

Many people are aiming for 'zero waste' by choosing to refuse any products that would likely end up in landfill. It's worthwhile researching terms such as "planned obsolescence", "perceived obsolescence", and "circular economy", if you are aiming for an empty bin!

The impact

Buying less will reduce the resources used to create new products. For each 1kg of rubbish created at home, up to 70kg can be created upstream.

Buying secondhand, sharing or not buying at all can save you lots of money in the long run!

#PlasticLessJuly #PlasticPollutionCoalition #EarthEthics

### **Plastic Less July. Day 27, Tip 27.**

Make your own personal care products! Did you know that personal items come in single use plastic containers? Most containers can't be or aren't recycled. Buy a glass jar or tin for storing your homemade goods. Not only are homemade goods not using plastic on the inside, but there isn't any plastic on the inside (ingredients)! There are also no fillers, metals, or other harmful chemicals.

#### TOOTHPASTE

Recipe 1 Ingredients: 4 teaspoons baking soda 1 teaspoon table salt Instructions: Mix the ingredients together. You can make some of this up in advance, just multiply and use 4 parts baking soda to one-part salt. Take some of the mixture and add just enough water to make a toothpaste.

Recipe 2 Ingredients: 4 teaspoons baking soda 1 teaspoon table salt 3 teaspoons hydrogen peroxide (3% solution only! Get from the chemist) Instructions: Mix the baking soda and salt then add hydrogen peroxide to make it into a toothpaste.

Recipe 3 Ingredients: 4 teaspoons baking soda 1 teaspoon table salt as much glycerin as you need to make a paste (from the chemist) Instructions: Mix the baking soda and salt, add glycerin to make it into a toothpaste.

#PlasticLessJuly #PlasticPollutionCoalition #EarthEthics

### **Plastic Less July. Day 28, Tip 28.**

Make your own personal care products! Did you know that personal items come in single use plastic containers? Most containers can't be or aren't recycled. Buy a glass jar or tin for storing your homemade goods. Not only are homemade goods not using plastic on the inside, but there isn't any plastic on the inside (ingredients)! There are also no fillers, metals, or other harmful chemicals.

#### LIQUID SOAP

Although we are sharing this recipe, we aren't exactly sure if we need liquid soap. Sure, it's convenient, but bar soap works just as well, at least in our opinion. You decide.

Here's what you need: Cheese grater (from the dollar store) 2 Tablespoons of Liquid Glycerin (found in the band aid section at any drugstore or grocery store) 1 - 8 oz bar of soap 1 gallon of distilled water.

Step 1: Grate the entire bar of soap.

Step 2: Fill a pot with 1 gallon of distilled water and add the soap shavings.

Step 3: Add 2 Tablespoons of liquid glycerin and turn the heat to medium/high and stir until the soap dissolves.

Step 4: It looks like soapy water once it's dissolved.

Step 5: Leave it alone to cool for at least 10-12 hours. It begins to cloud up after 3-4 hours.

Step 6: After it has cooled completely around 12 hours later it will harden and look like liquid soap.

Step 7: If the soap is harder than it should be you can take some beaters and blend it while adding just a little bit of water until the consistency is more like liquid soap.

Step 8: Now you can refill your 12-ounce bottle of liquid soap (that cost \$3.99) with your gallon of refill that cost around \$4.99. That's some huge savings!!!

#PlasticLessJuly #PlasticPollutionCoalition #EarthEthics

### **Plastic Less July. Day 29, Tip 29.**

Choose to get involved in your local or state government. Check and see if your local government or state government has issued a ban on certain plastics in your community or state such as plastic straws, bags or bottles. If not, see what you can do to encourage them to do so!

The State of Florida has in their statute's language banning a ban on certain plastics. There has been action for the last several years to have this language removed so local municipalities can make their own choices. Florida residents see below for more details on this language.

Here's the language in Florida Statutes (FS) since 2008. It's been over 10 years and this language is no longer valid really since it states that the legislation should have acted by 2010. They've done nothing.

403.7033 Departmental analysis of recyclable materials. — The Legislature finds that prudent regulation of recyclable materials is crucial to the ongoing welfare of Florida's ecology and economy. As such, the Department of Environmental Protection shall undertake an analysis of the need for new or different regulation of auxiliary containers, wrappings, or disposable plastic bags used by consumers to carry products from retail establishments. The analysis shall include input from state and local government agencies, stakeholders, private businesses, and citizens, and shall evaluate the efficacy and necessity of both statewide and local regulation of these materials. To ensure consistent and effective implementation, the department shall submit a report with conclusions and recommendations to the Legislature no later than February 1, 2010. Until such time that the Legislature adopts the recommendations of the department, no local government, local governmental agency, or state government agency may enact any rule, regulation, or ordinance regarding use, disposition, sale, prohibition, restriction, or tax of such auxiliary containers, wrappings, or disposable plastic bags.

History. —s. 96, Ch. 2008-227.

<http://www.flsenate.gov/laws/statutes/2011/403.7033>

Make a change in your state or community. Together we can reduce the impacts of plastics!

#PlasticLessJuly #PlasticPollutionCoalition #EarthEthics

**Plastic Less July...Day 30, Tip 30.**

Don't think that it's ok to reuse plastic bottles.

Just go out and get an unlined stainless-steel water bottle. You'll be doing the environment and your body good!

<https://www.thoughtco.com/reusing-plastic-bottles-serious-health-hazards-1204028>

**Plastic Less July. Day 31, Tip 31.**

Start where you are.

Incorporate one, two or more of the tips you've learned, developed yourself to reduce or eliminate your use of plastic.

Do you really need to use plastic bags? Get sturdy cotton canvas bags. Turn it into an art project. Got kids? Get blank bags and spend an afternoon decorating them together.

Get your whole family usable stainless-steel water bottles. Get your favorite color, get ones that you can put pictures on. Get creative.

Share your plastic less ideas with others. It really does make a difference!