

REDUCING HOUSEHOLD PLASTICS - EASY FIXES

No one should feel guilty about their use of plastics. Plastics are ubiquitous and impossible to avoid. And you, alone, can't fix this problem. But, as an informed shopper/user of plastics, there are easy ways to reduce our use of plastics in our homes.

There are many more things you can do than are on this list, but these are things you can do right now. Maybe pick three to do now. Note that we are giving examples of products, below, but are not endorsing these products. There are many more like them on the market, and many helpful websites. One very good one is [Green Matters](#).

Bathroom

- Use toothpaste that doesn't come in a plastic tube. Your choices are toothpaste tablets ([here is an example](#)), powdered toothpaste ([Here are some examples](#)) (usually comes in a glass jar), or make your own (here's information on [making your own](#)). If you love tube toothpaste, just reduce the amount you use. You only need a tiny bit to refresh your mouth, and it is not the toothpaste that is important, but the act of brushing. One tube of toothpaste can last 6 months or more!
- Buy shampoo, conditioner and soap at the refill stores (listed below). Bring your own reusable container.
- Look for [makeup that is not made with microplastics](#) (most are!)

Kitchen/Food shopping

- Buy sponges that are not made of plastic. Choices include [Skoy scrubbers](#) (made from cotton and remnant fibers) and [Pop-up sponges](#) (made from vegetable cellulose)
- Refuse plastic bags when out shopping
- **Don't** buy water in plastic bottles. The water from your tap is regulated for pollutants; water in plastic bottles is not. The number of plastic water bottles consumed each day is astronomical.
- Products like olive oil and tea can be bought in bulk at the zero waste stores in town (see below for stores in the Denver area)
- Pay attention to packaging. Buy unwrapped items or items in glass bottles, rather than plastic. Examples: apple sauce, bar soap, and oils.
- Make beans and soups from scratch. They are easy to make, most likely healthier, and avoids the packaging
- Buy fruits and vegetables loose – do not put them in an extra plastic bag when buying. You are going to wash them when you get home anyway!
- Break up with on-line shopping, or at least reduce. The packaging waste is enormous. In terms of energy use, you'd have to do an analysis of whether pick up or delivery is better.

Clothing

- Most clothes in your closet are plastic! Reduce your buying of plastic clothes. That means looking at labels and reducing anything made with fleece, polyester, nylon. A list of some natural clothing brands can be found [here](#).
- Wash your “plastic” (and other) clothes less often. That will reduce the microplastic load
- Buy second-hand clothes. The climate change and overall ecological impact of making new clothes is huge, no matter what the clothes are made of. Buying gently used, second-hand clothing reduces that load substantially.

Cleaning

- Reduce the amount of detergent you use. Remember that the product company is in the business of selling you more. You can probably use half the suggested amount.
- There are laundry detergents that do not come in plastic bottles. Examples include [laundry tablets](#), [laundry sheets](#), and laundry detergents that come [in cardboard boxes](#).
- Always wash clothing in cold water. It is not the hot water that cleans the clothes, but the agitation. (ok, this is not a plastic reduction tip, but an important energy tip!)

Outside the house

- Refuse anything coming in a plastic bag or container.
- Refuse any single use plastic. Bring your own utensils, straws, coffee mugs, to go containers etc. Carry a to-go kit with you.

At B’nai or with your Havurah

- Replace plastic kiddish cups with reusables. It will take a little more work, but worth it
- Bring your own to-go container for leftovers at your Chavurah get together. No more plastic containers or wrap!
- When participating in a pot luck, use reusable covers for your food, rather than plastic wrap or aluminum foil.

ZERO WASTE STORES IN DENVER AREA

Off The Bottle

220 E. 13th Avenue
Denver, CO 80203
(720) 693-8126

Zero Market: two locations

Stanley Marketplace
2501 Dallas St. suite 160 Aurora, CO 80010
[\(720\) 282-3489](tel:7202823489)

Edgewater Public Market
5505 W 20th Ave STE 150 Edgewater, CO 80214
[\(303\) 269-9902](tel:3032699902)

Joyfill

Source for refillable and sustainable household cleaners, personal care and beauty products
4340 W 35th Avenue
Denver, CO 80212
(720) 645-2858

Refillanthropy

Detergents, personal care, pet supplies, teas, etc.
5 E. Bayaud Ave.
Denver, CO 80209
Refillanthropy.com

Sprouts

Sprouts has many locations throughout the Denver area with quite a few bulk bins.

For more, go to www.litterless.com

RECYCLING OPPORTUNITIES

And Dos and Don'ts

Your trash and recycling bins should be your last resort. Before anything hits them, you should: RETHINK, REFUSE, REDUCE, REUSE, REPAIR, ROT (i.e., compost), and then RECYCLE (the 6 Rs)
Or, you can: Buy Less, Buy Local and Buy to Last (the 3 Ls).

Some recycling facts:

- Recycling only happens when it makes economic sense. That is not often
- The recycling arrow symbol does not mean an item is recyclable. It identifies the type of resin used to make the item. The number in the arrow is important. Numbers 1,2 and 5, are more recyclable; Numbers 3, 6, and 7, and all black plastics, are more difficult to recycle and should be avoided where possible as they are more toxic.
- Only about 5% of plastics actually gets recycled
- Aluminum and glass is almost always recycled when placed in the recycling bin. These are the better choices.
- If you throw things in the recycling that are not recyclable, it contaminates the entire load. Never put things in the recycling bin that you “think” might be recyclable, but probably aren't.

For more than our Denver city recycling takes, here are a few suggestions, There is much more information out there; this is just a sample:

[The Denver Hard-To-Recycle Guide](#) is a good place to start!

[Ridwell Denver](#): pay for a bin, and they will pick up plastic bags, shoes, clothes, batteries, film, lightbulbs, electronic cords, etc....

[The Happy Beetle](#): our local version of Ridwell

King Soopers and Safeway: have bins for plastic bags

Batteries Plus: Will take batteries and lightbulbs. Some they will charge for

Restore – Habitat for Humanity: Will take building materials for reuse

[Colorado Medication Take-back program](#): will take expired medications

[The Junkluggers of Colorado](#): will help you declutter your home, and recycle anything they can

[Catalog Choice](#): To stop junk mail

[Compost Colorado](#): composting, for those who don't have city composting

[Scraps Mile High](#): another option for composting

NOTE: Americans produce a whopping 287 pounds of plastic per person, annually (2021 figure) Colorado is among the 20 most wasteful states. Our recycling and composting rate was 15.3%, meaning 84.7% of the state's waste went into landfills. The national average is 32%. We can do better!