

Say NO to plastic bags

4 million New Zealanders use more than 1 billion plastic bags each year. That's almost 300 per person. Sometimes you need a plastic bag, but (with a little planning) most times you don't. If you don't need a plastic bag, don't take it.

- Take **your own bags** to the shops or use an alternative such as a **cardboard box or backpack** if you walk to the shops. Most supermarkets now sell reusable bags or will supply a cardboard box for groceries when requested.
- Most fruit and vegetables don't need a plastic bag. Put your loose fruit and veg directly into your trolley or basket. Don't buy produce that comes wrapped in plastic or polystyrene packaging.
- If you are composting your organic waste you don't even need a plastic bag as a bin liner. Just give it a rinse every time you empty it.

General shopping tips:

- **Pre-cycling** is the best way to reduce waste. If it cannot be recycled, don't buy it.
- Buy products containing **recycled materials**. This will help create demand and grow the recycling industry in New Zealand and also conserve resources.
- **Buy goods second-hand**. This will increase the reuse of items and reduce the amount of unsold second-hand goods being sent to landfills.



Sustainable living

Consider attending a course and learning more.

A variety of courses on sustainable living, growing your own food and composting are run throughout the year in the region. Enquire with the Nelson Environment Centre what's on by emailing to info@nec.org.nz. Here you can also subscribe to our digital EcoEvents newsletter.



Useful website links:

www.nec.org.nz
www.reducerubbish.govt.nz
www.zerowaste.co.nz
www.sustainableliving.org.nz
www.createyourowneden.org.nz

Your Personal Guide to Waste Reduction

Become a conscious Consumer & Improve Your Shopping Choices



New Zealanders throw away 3.6 million tonnes of rubbish every year. If we were to measure this in 9 tonne buses it would equate to 400,000 buses of rubbish - more than 1,000 buses every day!

Reduction is the **BEST** waste management option, because it means there is less waste to manage.

DO YOU WANT TO REDUCE YOUR RUBBISH ?

The first step to reduce the amount of rubbish in your rubbish bag is to take a look at how much of it is packaging. The average rubbish bag contains around 40% packaging. By making some informed shopping choices you can easily reduce this amount.

Here are some ideas to get you started...

Buy only what you need

- Before purchasing any item ask yourself: "Do I really need it?"
- Think beyond ownership: Try sharing a lawnmower with neighbours, trading unwanted clothes with friends, hiring a trailer or power tool or buying something second hand.



Buy products with little packaging

Packaging is a major cause of New Zealand waste. On average each person in New Zealand throws away 83 kilograms of packaging each year. This is equivalent to 16,000 plastic shopping bags for each person!

Tips for reducing the amount of packaging waste:

- Choose products that have **little packaging**. This sends a clear message to manufacturers that we

want less packaging. Alternatively leave packaging in the shop and ask them to recycle it.

- **Buy fresh, seasonal, or local produce** rather than heavily processed foods, which may be high in packaging.
- **Buy in bulk** to save money and reduce packaging. Consider buying from a wholesale supplier by getting together with a group of friends.
- Choose **concentrates or refills**. Use laundry concentrates. Use pens with replaceable refills - this way you only dispose of a refill, not the whole pen.
- Some shops allow customers to bring their **own containers and refill** them from the store's bulk supplies of products such as shampoo, dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent, and cooking oil.
- If you cannot find a product with little or no packaging, **email, phone or write to the manufacturer** asking why.



The *New Zealand Packaging Accord* sets voluntary targets for industry to reduce their packaging.

Buy quality products that can be reused or refilled

- Buy **quality long-lasting** products - it may cost a little more at the outset but it will save you money over time.
- Buy **reusable** rather than disposable products: Try rechargeable batteries, a coffee cup that you ask



your cafe to fill for you, cloth serviettes instead of paper, a dishcloth instead of paper towel, reusable nappies instead of disposable ones.



- Buy a single **water bottle** (stainless steel or glass are best) and refill it over and over. Using a water filter still provides you with fresh drinking water while reducing the number of water bottles to be recycled - it is also cheaper in the long-run.

Tips for buying gifts

- Give experiences as presents. Massage vouchers, dinners out, and even your time make marvelous presents... and they don't require any wasteful packaging.
- Babies don't know the difference between an expensive toy and one made from recycled materials. Plastic bottles filled with pasta, rice, old beads etc. make great rattles (the bottle needs to be safe and clean).
- If possible buy toys that can be repaired if they break (e.g. wooden toys).

Tips for reducing paper waste

- Put a 'No junk mail please' sign on your mail box.
- Unsubscribe to unwanted mailing lists by telephoning or emailing them directly.
- Ask to receive your bills and bank statements electronically.
- Only print what you need and use double sided printing wherever possible.
- Use email correspondence rather than the mail. Use the internet to search for information and prices, rather than requesting brochures and price lists. It saves paper as well as fuel to transport your mail.