

1 LIFESTYLE CHANGES REGARDING EVERYDAY PLASTICS

ECO Tips : Lifestyle changes regarding everyday plastics

This guide is geared towards inspiring & helping you to reduce your daily plastic consumption. Input, suggestions, or creative ideas are welcomed.

July 17, 2019

Prepared for: People Inc, Green Committee

Prepared by: Alexis Oltmer, Artist & Founder of Plastic Free Buffalo

Website : AlexisOltmer.com

Contact: alexisoltmer@gmail.com

2 LIFESTYLE CHANGES REGARDING EVERYDAY PLASTICS

Why is it important to reduce my plastic consumption?

Plastic Pollution has become a constant physical reminder of the current health of our planet, our environment, and fellow humans. You can find it on the street or at the beach, its everywhere. According to a study done by R.I.T over 22 million pounds of Plastic enters the Great Lakes each year transforming into Plastic Pollution. Since plastic isn't biodegradable, it remains in the Lakes and breaks down into smaller and smaller pieces known as micro plastics. This is bad for our ecosystems, general safety and the quality of our drinking water and makes removal challenging. The Alliance for the Great lakes has stated *"Researchers have found stunningly high amounts of tiny plastic pieces in all five Great Lakes, which provide drinking water for 40 million people. They've found microscopic pieces of plastic in drinking water, and even beer."*

When we think about The Great Lakes, we are often reminded that our lakes are vast, powerful and inspiring, that they even can be Ocean-like. Its important to think about how Plastic Pollution travels from fresh waters Lakes, rivers, streams and tributaries into our Oceans. Currently scientists estimate that over 8 million tones of plastic enters the Oceans each year. This is why I began my art project *For Future Generations*, on view January 2020 at The CEPA Gallery in downtown Buffalo, which lead to the movement #PlasticFreeBuffalo. I am extremely passionate about keeping our fresh water clean. We must make take action locally to restoring the health of our fresh water ecosystems. Right now, we have an amazing opportunity to have an actual impact on restoring the health of our Oceans and Fresh bodies of water. If we make small, daily lifestyle changes regarding how we consume goods, we can have a major impact in reducing the amount of Plastic Pollution entering our waterways.

Solution

I believe in a future beyond single use plastics, and I know that it will take a strong grassroots effort. One that not only we in the United States are creating and participate in, yet a grassroots movement that is of a global scale. Only together can we find creative, tangible, feasible, and collective positive ideas leading towards solutions. The good news is, the movement has already started, and our planet needs your action.

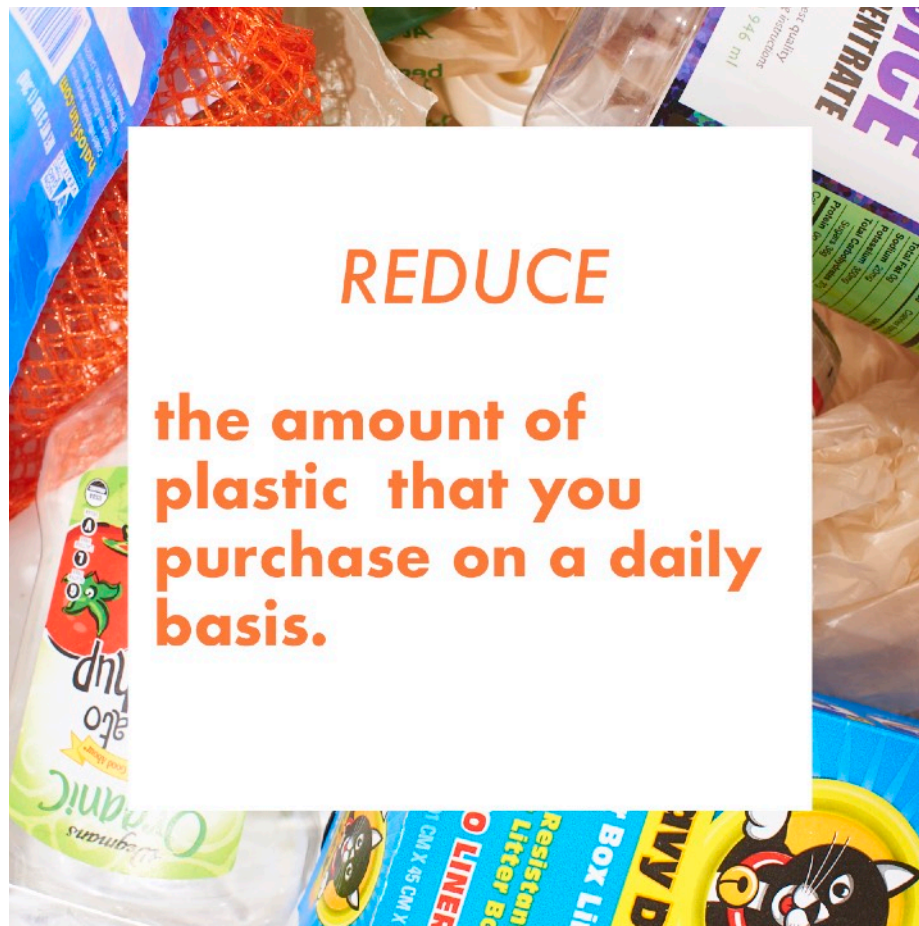
How to make an impact - Key points

- Reduce, Reuse, Recycle - especially Plastics.
- Vote at the Ballot, speak with your elected officials, family & friends.
- Vote as a consumer, speak with the businesses you support, family & friends.
- Make Lifestyle changes to reduce the amount of plastic you purchase and use daily.
- Host your own plastic pollution clean up event & support local movements.
- Research how other citizens & counties are fighting & creating ideas against Plastic Pollution.

Resources

Alliance for the Great Lakes, American Chemical Society, Beyond Plastic Bennington, Plastic Pollution Coalition, Our Planet.

3 LIFESTYLE CHANGES REGARDING EVERYDAY PLASTICS



1. REDUCE

The amount of plastic that you purchase on a weekly basis. It's a lifestyle change for sure & it is possible.

2. PLASTIC BAG BAN

All plastic bags used for commercial consumption should be banned worldwide. Ever notice the small bag you get at the dentist? Kindly refuse the bag & place the items in a canvas bag or purse.

3. REFILLABLE WATER BOTTLES

Use these daily, and get in the habit of not purchasing single use plastic water/drink bottles.

4. REFILLABLE MUG

Use these for whatever hot beverages you prefer, instead of the single use most companies offer. Chances are if you ask, you will get a refill discount.

5. REUSABLE BAG

Use this instead of plastic or paper. Keeping a few in the car, or a collapsible reusable bag clipped to your bike helps out.

4 LIFESTYLE CHANGES REGARDING EVERYDAY PLASTICS



6. SHOP IN BULK

Bring in your own refillable containers for rice, flour, popcorn, coffee etc.

7. REFUSE PLASTIC STRAWS

If you really like straws, bring your own reusable straw to diner/bar/etc.

8. LETS TALK ABOUT PLANTS.

Your potted green babes will thrive in terra-cotta planters verses plastic pots. They are very helpful if you tend to over water as they have proper drainage and allow for moisture to disperse quicker than plastic.

9. HYGIENE

Take a look at your face wash and toothpaste. if they contain micro-beads swap them out for brands which do not contain micro-beads. These micro plastics end up in our oceans and in the bellies of marine life around the globe.

5 LIFESTYLE CHANGES REGARDING EVERYDAY PLASTICS



10. LESS POLY MORE NATURE

Read your clothing labels before purchase, it is crazy how much most companies charge for clothing made out of plastic (polyester)! When possible purchase natural fiber material only. Clothing made from oil/plastics have an impact on our water as fibers break from the clothing during washing and end up in our water systems.

11. NATURAL CLOTH NAPKINS

Invest in 100% natural fiber napkins instead of paper napkins sold in plastic packaging. You can pick them up at church sales, yard sales or at most home department stores. You can even make a project of your own and make napkins from scratch.

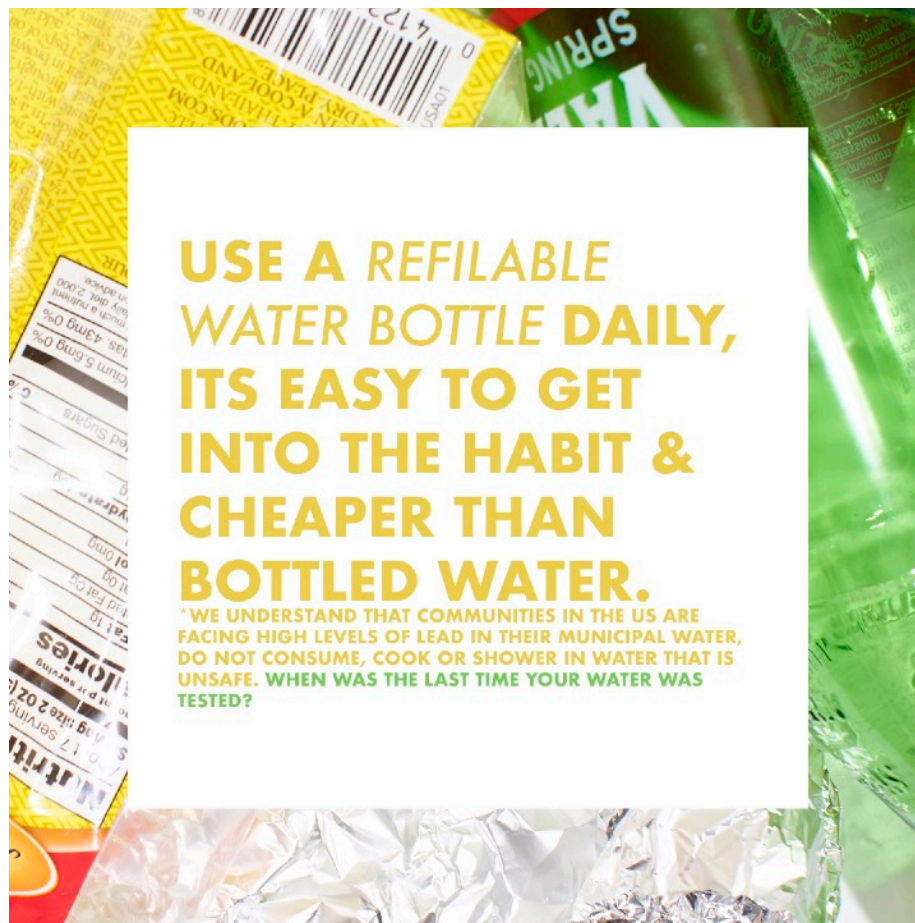
12. FOOD STORAGE

Get cooking with the ones you love more & use glass reusable containers to store your prepped meals & delicious goods. Pyrex is a good brand, and often goes on sale. Their containers are dishwasher safe, and stackable in the cabinet.

13. UTENSILS

Avoid & Refuse single use plastic utensils, try bringing your own utensils to work. Wooden chopsticks have saved me many times.

6 LIFESTYLE CHANGES REGARDING EVERYDAY PLASTICS



14. FRESH NOT FROZEN

Stop purchasing frozen foods when possible, most if not all the packaging is plastic and or cardboard which is not recyclable as it is "contaminated"

15. LOCAL MATTERS

Better yet if you can join a CSA with your family or friends try to do so. You eat locally, help out your local farm and break up your shopping routine with items you may not be accustomed too.

16. FARMERS MARKETS

I have found that seasonal farmers markets gives consumers more of an opportunity to bring their own containers and storage for fresh produce. Check out your local market if you haven't already!

17. DINE IN

If you choose to have a night out on the town, try opting to eat at a restaurant. This way you don't create as much waste from "taking out". If the restaurant you are eating at only offers food on single use plastic, kindly ask for the manager and let them know as a customer you would prefer plates, silverware & cloth napkins.

7 LIFESTYLE CHANGES REGARDING EVERYDAY PLASTICS



18. TAKING OUT?

We all know Mondays can be rough. So if you are taking out, ask if you can pick up your food by bringing your own reusable containers. And at the least, refuse the single use plastic utensils.

19. SCRUB UP

Who doesn't love a good soapy hand wash? Purchase blocks of soap for your household instead of single use bottles.

20. FILL UP

If your local grocery offers, bring your soap receptacles to the store and fill them up. Most groceries are beginning to offer this for hand soap & clothing detergent.

21. HAIR, HAIR, EVERYWHERE

Body hair is beautiful and natural. If you choose to shave, opt for a razor with replaceable blades instead of disposable razor.

22. CELEBRATIONS

This may sound drab, but try not wrapping your gifts with store bought wrapping paper. Use old newspaper, brown paper wrap, or nothing at all. Its the thought that mattered...not the wrapping. If you really want that color pop, save wrapping from presents you receive and use it for your next gift giving exchange.

23. PARTY TIME!

If you love to host, try asking your guests to bring silverware, plates, bowls and cups. This will really help out on cutting down on plastic, plus your friends might even be cool enough to help wash up.

24. NEED A LIGHT?

Whether you are lighting a grill, starting a camp fire, are an avid lover of candles, use matches instead of disposable plastic lighters or purchase a refillable lighter. Single use plastic lighters are extremely common washing ashore Lake Erie.

24. NEW RIDE?

If your in the market for a new car, look at used cars verses brand new. Ever taken a moment to look at the inside of your car? Its pretty much 80% plastic.

25. CARDBOARD NOT PLASTIC

Try purchasing house hold items in cardboard containers verses plastic. Cardboard is often easier to recycle than plastic. You can also reuse your cardboard boxes to store and file house hold goods.

26. FOOD PREP

Purchase, Build or use wooden cutting boards verses plastic boards. Wash with soap & lemon to disinfect. If you eat a high amount of meat, having a plastic board specifically for meat is advised for sanitary purposes.

27. DINER TIME

If you haven't already invest in stone, glassware, or anything other than plastic to eat off of. The same goes for your cups and utensils as well.

28. 4,567 EMAILS

Keep your inbox clean & unsubscribe from junk mail. It takes electricity to host your data on servers. Every time you send an email it also requires electricity. To put this into perspective, the carbon output of hitting "send" on 65 mails is on par with driving an average-sized car a 0.6 of a mile

29. LIGHTS OUT

If you aren't in the room, turn the light off. Keeping lights on does lead to a carbon output/footprint. What an easy way to make a small impact!

30. DRIP.DRIP.DRIP

Don't let your faucets run if you don't need the water! Use what you need to get the job done!