

## WAYS TO RECYCLE AND REDUCE YOUR USE OF PLASTIC

**Reducing plastic use is better than just recycling it. Make a list of the plastics you use and consider substituting more environmentally safe products.** Try to eliminate plastics that are just preferences or conveniences. Some examples:

- Consider buying bars of soap instead of liquid hand soap sold in plastic bottles. Shampoo soap bars and laundry soap sheets are also available on line and in some stores.
- Buy products in glass containers instead of plastic because recycled glass is reused in Arlington and Fairfax counties and in most other jurisdictions.
- Buy beverages in aluminum cans, which can be recycled better than plastic.
- Instead of plastic sandwich bags, buy reusable and compostable beeswax wrappers.
- Wash and reuse aluminum foil and zipper plastic bags.

**Always bring your own reusable bags when grocery shopping, including bags (e.g. mesh ones) for produce.** If you have any plastic bags, put them in the recycling bin on your next visit to the store.

**When ordering food or eating out, refuse Polystyrene (Styrofoam) packaging,** small condiment packets, and plastic cutlery. Carry your own beverage container, metal or bamboo straw, etc.

**Buy clothing made of natural fabrics** such as cotton, silk, wool, linen, bamboo or hemp rather than synthetics, which are made from plastic. The plastic in synthetics, which breaks up over time in washing, contains tiny micro-plastics that can leach through plant filters into rivers and the ocean. Micro-plastics are found everywhere in the environment, including in the food chain and into our bodies.

**Let merchants know that you won't buy products in plastic packaging.** An easy way to do this is to fill out the store's survey on your receipt.

**Affirm the actions of merchants who are reducing their plastic use,** such as Trader Joe's. Let the store manager or company know you appreciate their reducing plastic bags and packaging.

**When ordering items from a company online, try to have them shipped together.** It will reduce the number of packages you receive. Also let the company know that you want compostable materials used to protect the contents of a package in lieu of plastic packets, bubble wrap, etc.

**Write/call your county, state, and federal government representatives/senators** to let them know that you support a ban on the use of plastics bags, straws, etc. in stores or restaurants.

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**Lobby your members of Congress to impose a manufacturing tax on plastic producers.**

**Visit your recycling center.** See how much waste there is and learn what is valuable to recycle, such as aluminum cans. Find out what is recycled by your trash collection service and don't include items in your recycle bin they won't accept. It could end up being incinerated, which contributes to air pollution.

**Educate yourself about which plastics are/are not recyclable** in your community. Learn about biodegradables: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/10/01/climate/biodegradable-containers.html>. **Visit the following websites:** [breakfreefromplastic.org](http://breakfreefromplastic.org); [endplasticwaste.org/](http://endplasticwaste.org/)