



# GreenNY

## Reducing Single-Use Plastics

Single-use plastics have only been around for a few decades and make modern life convenient and easy, but they also have a dark side. Plastic pollution is clogging streams and water infrastructure, littering natural areas, and choking our oceans. Disturbing images of the impact that plastic pollution is having on wildlife and ecosystems also brought the impact of single-use plastics into the limelight.

*So, what can we do?*

### 1. Plan Ahead

- Make a waste reduction kit for your backpack, handbag, or vehicle so you're prepared on the go. It can include a reusable: shopping bag, container for leftovers, water bottle, coffee mug, straw, and eating utensils. Keep a similar meal kit at your desk!
- Purchase and bring plastic free snacks, such as fruit, veggies, homemade cookies and dips, and bulk snacks in reusable containers.
- Purchase refillable travel sized containers for toiletries and refill with larger bottles of products you have at home.

### 3. If You Can't Reuse, Refuse!

It's OK to say that you don't want a straw with your drink or a plastic bag with your purchase. Most staff are trained to always provide the single-use plastic item, but you don't have to take the item and won't be the first person that's refused.

Don't feel like you have to run out and replace every plastic item you have right now. Use items to the fullest extent possible until they've reached the end of their useful life. When an item is ready for donation, recycling, or disposal and you need to replace it, look for a way to avoid plastic options at that point with the new item or items you plan to purchase.

**50%**

of plastic waste generated globally is from plastic packaging.

Source: United Nations Environment, Single-Use Plastics: A Roadmap for Sustainability available at [https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/25496/singleUsePlastic\\_sustainability.pdf](https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/25496/singleUsePlastic_sustainability.pdf)

### What is a Single-Use Plastic?

**Single-use plastics (SUP)** are commonly used for packaging and include items intended to be used only once before they are disposed of.

Common items include:

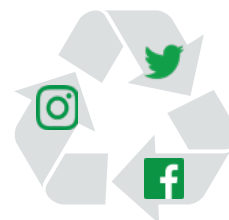
- grocery bags
- food packaging
- bottles
- straws
- cups and cutlery
- take-out containers



### 2. Think Before You Buy

Avoid products with SUP if possible and if you can't avoid it, seek out options with the least amount of packaging.

- Try bar soap/shampoo/conditioner.
- Try a non-plastic toothbrush, such as one made of bamboo.
- Purchase post-consumer recycled content trash bags.
- Try containers with lids instead of buying plastic wrap to store food.
- Use decorations other than balloons or those made of SUP for parties eg. bells, bubbles, plants, etc.
- Try using silicone baking mats in the kitchen
- Simply choose tap water instead of buying single use bottles of water and try drink mixes instead of single bottles for sports drinks.



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