

The world of eco-responsible packaging: a practical guide

Every day tips and advice: adopt good habits

Whether we want to stock our kitchen cupboards, get dressed or take a shower, we need to purchase a lot of things to get through the day. It's therefore important to keep the environment in mind.

1) According to the place the product is consumed



On the go: Packaging that goes everywhere

In your daily routine of work, school and social activities, getting from one location to another takes up a lot of your time. That's why many companies offer products specifically designed to make them easy to consume on the go. Packaging lets you carry the product in your bag from point A to point B and is often reclosable to avoid waste if there's still some left.



At home: Solutions for the whole family

Products used at home meet a lot of different needs and consumption habits. Companies therefore offer a whole range of sizes adapted to the situation, regardless of family size or type of housing.



Away from home: At work or at school

Preparing lunches can be a real puzzle. To make everyone's life easier, some companies package their products in single-serving sizes that preserve freshness. An eco-responsible way to solve the problem is to buy a larger size and divide the product into smaller reusable containers.

2) According to the type of purchase



Food products: One bite at a time

Food products are probably the item for which packaging plays the most obvious role. It allows products to be offered in a range of quantities, ensures safety and often extends the life of perishable foods. Eco-responsible choices include buying only the quantity needed to ensure there's no waste, especially in the case of perishable foods, and choosing products with packaging that will conserve food for a longer period of time. When it comes to non-perishable foods, however, large sizes are best, as less packaging is used overall.



Health and beauty: Little jars and larger ones

Whether for medication or various types of creams, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals packaging performs many functions, such as marketing products in various quantities, facilitating product use, allowing the application of a safety seal and displaying information. Making eco-responsible choices can be as simple as buying a refill for your favourite facial cream or selecting products with recyclable packaging.

Why not add a basket in the bathroom, kitchen or office to collect recyclable materials for later transfer to the recycling bin? Doing so will give a second life to your shampoo bottle, toothpaste tube and even facial cream jar.

Small medication containers are usually recyclable, but they must be emptied first. Instead of throwing expired medications in the garbage where they could find their way to water sources, bring them to an ecocentre or a drugstore. These professionals know how to properly dispose of such products.



Household products: Keep the environment in mind when cleaning your home

Just like your other daily purchases, you can make eco-responsible choices when selecting household products. For example, reach for refills when you need products sold in spray bottles. Check that the packaging will allow you to use all of its contents and exact doses for each purpose so you can avoid product loss and waste. Concentrated products that contain less water, like laundry detergent, are often sold in smaller containers.

3) According to the special occasion



Holiday period: Celebrate responsibly

When guests come over for a Holiday party, buy family-size packages instead of single-servings to minimize packaging. For gift giving, buy colourful gift wrap made with recycled fibres, or gift wrap and bags that don't have a metallic or plastic film, as these are more easily recycled. The most creative among you can make stunning homemade wrap using decorated or painted paper cuttings or newspaper. Virtual Holiday greeting cards are also a good option. Finally, don't waste all that delicious leftover food. Pack some in margarine or yogourt containers for friends and family to take home.



Moving day: Boxes galore

Moving day is the perfect time to reuse cardboard boxes. Some stores are pleased to give you their used boxes to pack your belongings for the big move. Empty jars are great for organizing screws, nails and other small items, while circulars and newspapers provide protection for fragile pieces. Once your moving boxes are piled high in your new home at the end of the day, don't forget that the box from your pizza dinner can be recycled, provided that you've removed the leftover crust, of course!



Spring cleaning: For a greener spring

Take out your brooms, dust cloths and cleaning rags: It's time to get to work! Why not be eco-responsible as well? Newspaper, for example, does an amazingly good job on windows, and old shoe boxes are great for organizing papers and all kinds of accessories. If you run out of cleaning products, buy a product refill instead of a new spray bottle.



On vacation: Little outings and big trips

Regardless of your destination, you can be eco-responsible even when you're taking in the sights. When camping, get packaged products that will hold up well in your picnic cooler, like vacuum-packed meat packaging and reclosable milk containers. It's also the ideal time to reuse empty plastic containers to preserve leftovers and prepared vegetables. Don't forget your refillable water bottle! Continue your good recycling habits, even when away from home, by placing recyclable materials in publicly available bins.



Halloween: Sweet recycling ideas

Although Halloween is a good excuse for a candy party, it's also an opportunity to make eco-responsible choices. Instead of buying costumes and decorations every year, store them and use them again several times, or make new ones using recovered packaging and products. When the ghouls and witches come to your door, avoid using individual goody bags. That will reduce excess packaging that may or may not end up in the recycling bin.

In a nutshell... here are the 3 key moments:

Buy

At the store, choose products with eco-responsible packaging. Don't forget to bring your reusable shopping bags! Be sure to clean the bags from time to time and avoid buying too many of them, as their production consumes significant resources and energy. If you've forgotten them home, plastic bags provided at the cash register may be later reused to collect kitchen waste or animal excrement, or bagged together and placed in the recycling bin.

Use

If you know you can use up all the product, choose larger sizes instead of single-serving containers. That way, you will reduce the quantity of packaging placed in the recycling bin. In some cases like yogurt, the larger size container is recyclable, while the single-serving is not necessarily so. Of course, it's always better to buy a smaller size that meets your needs if the extra product in a large one will end up as waste. You may also consider freezing that extra product to extend its life.

A second life

Many items you use every day are made with recycled materials. The containers, packaging and printed matter you place in your recycling bin are collected, sorted and processed by materials recyclers. Manufacturers then use the "new" materials to make other packaging, printed matter and sometimes whole new products such as clothing, furniture or construction materials.

Go to our website to make eco-responsible choices

eeqecoresponsible.com