

Tip 1: Reduce the Amount of Packaging



Packaging serves many purposes. Its primary purpose is to protect and contain a product. It also can prevent tampering, provide information, and preserve hygienic integrity and freshness. Some packaging, however, is designed largely to enhance a product's attractiveness or prominence on the store shelf. Since packaging materials account for a large volume of the trash we generate, they provide a good opportunity for reducing waste. In addition, keep in mind that as the amount of product in a container increases, the packaging waste per serving or use usually decreases.

- When choosing between two similar products, select the one with the least unnecessary packaging.
- Remember that wrenches, screwdrivers, nails, and other hardware are often available in loose bins. At the grocery, consider whether it is necessary to purchase items such as tomatoes, garlic, and mushrooms in prepackaged containers when they can be bought unpackaged.
- When appropriate, use products you already have on hand to do household chores. Using these products can save on the packaging associated with additional products.
- Recognize and support store managers when they stock products with no packaging or reduced packaging. Let clerks know when it's not necessary to double wrap a purchase.
- Consider large or economy-sized items for household products that are used frequently, such as laundry soap, shampoo, baking soda, pet foods, and cat litter. These sizes usually have less packaging per unit of product. For food items, choose the largest size that can be used before spoiling.
- Consider whether concentrated products are appropriate for your needs. They often require less packaging and less energy to transport to the store, saving money as well as natural resources.
- Whenever possible, select grocery, hardware, and household items that are available in bulk. Bulk merchandise also may be shared with friends or neighbors.
- It is important to choose food services that are appropriate to your needs. One alternative to single food services is to choose the next largest serving and store any leftovers in a reusable container.