

Pollution Prevention & You @ HOME

Pollution prevention, also known as P2, happens when people change their plans, practices and habits in order to reduce the generation of pollution and waste at the source, instead of trying to clean it up after the fact. Pollution prevention also includes activities that protect natural resources (i.e. trees, water) through conservation or more efficient use of resources.

The key to environmental sustainability is thinking globally and acting locally. Pollution prevention (P2) is about making smart choices — both in what we buy and in how we use products. It involves looking at the causes of waste and pollution and figuring out how to prevent them.

There is a lot that you can do in your home that will save energy and water and reduce the amount of waste created, while at the same time saving your family money. Even though you may not know it, you are probably already implementing P2 around your home. Here are some activities you, your friends, and family may already be doing or can do in the future to prevent pollution. Protecting the environment and practicing P2 is something that the whole family can do!

Save water

- Turn the water off while you are brushing your teeth. Do not let it run continuously.
- Have a short shower instead of a bath. It uses less water. When bathing, be sure not to overfill the tub.
- When washing or shaving, partially fill the sink basin and use that water rather than running the tap continuously.
- Ensure that you turn the taps off tightly to avoid dripping.
- Do not let the water run continuously. Wash dishes or clean fruit and vegetables in a partially filled sink, and then rinse them quickly under the tap.
- Instead of letting the tap run until the water gets cold, keep a jug of drinking water in the refrigerator.
- Conserve water by using just enough to cook food (i.e. when boiling vegetables).
- Wait until you have a full load to run the dishwasher or washing machine.
- If you can adjust the water level on your washing machine, ensure that you use only as much water as is necessary.
- Promptly repair leaks in and around taps and faucets.
- Place a plastic bottle filled with water in your toilet tank to reduce water use in the toilet.
- Install water-flow-reducing attachments to faucets and showerheads to reduce water use.
- Repair leaks in toilet tanks promptly. You can check for leaks from the toilet tank into the bowl quite easily. Put a small amount of food colouring into the toilet tank. If the coloured water appears in the toilet bowl without flushing, you should repair the leak.

Save energy

- Turn off lights when you leave a room.
- Use the energy saver option or shortest cycle necessary on appliances.
- If possible, line-dry your clothes outside in the summer.
- Replace incandescent light bulbs with more energy-efficient, longer-lasting fluorescent bulbs.
- For small meals, try using the microwave instead of heating up the oven.
- Turn the temperature on your water heater down. Most homes do not need extremely hot water.
- Ensure that windows and door frames are sealed properly to avoid heat or cool air from escaping.

Reduce waste

- Ensure that your household is implementing a recycling program.
- Find further uses for things instead of just discarding them. Be creative! Glass jars and plastic containers can be used to store bulk food and odds and ends.
- Re-use plastic grocery bags the next time you go shopping instead of bringing new ones home, or use them as garbage bags. Better yet, buy or make cloth shopping bags that can be used time and time again.
- Cardboard boxes and paper bags can be used to store things or when packing items for your next move.
- Re-use items. Save items that you will use again, such as wrapping paper, gift boxes and bags, string, rubber bands, and twist ties.
- Instead of discarding old or malfunctioning items, have them refurbished or repaired.
- Many household items, such as clothing, toys, and furniture, can be donated to social service or religious groups.
- Books and magazines can be donated to hospitals, senior citizens' residences, and schools.
- Many schools and day-care centres are always looking for items that can be used for arts and crafts projects. Give them a quick call to see if they need anything in particular.
- Create and maintain your own compost pile, if feasible. This will produce your own fertilizer and reduce the amount of garbage from your home.

Be consumer wise

- Buy in bulk to reduce waste.
- Purchase products and services from companies that are environmentally conscious.
- Purchase products that have been recycled or are recyclable. Keep your eyes open for reusable, recyclable or returnable packages.
- Use safer alternatives to hazardous chemicals. For example, use insecticidal soaps instead of chemical sprays to get rid of insects on your plants at home.
- Use less toxic cleaners, waxes, glues and adhesives, paints, paint removers, stains, etc.
- Look for driveway sealers that contain low levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). This will minimize contributions to the formation of smog.

Want to know more?

Visit the **Canadian Pollution Prevention Information Clearinghouse** at: <http://www.ec.gc.ca/cppic/> for additional sources of pollution prevention information.

Article compliments of Environment Canada; to view this article and other related articles go to:

<http://www.ec.gc.ca/nopp/docs/fact/en/p2home.cfm>