

Ask the Expert:

What healthy habits can also help the environment?

Written by Devyani Agarwal, Purdue University Psychological Sciences, Class of 2022

“Helping the environment” is an important goal for all of us to work toward, but knowing how to help the environment may be more challenging. However, there are a few simple ways to incorporate healthier habits in your life while also helping the environment.

Food waste is a large share of the waste in landfills and can be harmful to the environment. Animals can eat the decaying food and get sick, chemicals from the food can run into natural bodies of water, and the break-down of food waste can even make harmful gasses that are released into the air.

The plastic waste from food packaging is also harmful because it may take many years to decompose. You can help reduce your personal plastic use by avoiding single-use plastic bags when grocery shopping, and using reusable bags instead. Ask your local foodbank about this, because some food banks even give you points for using your own reusable bags!

Another impactful thing that you can do to help the environment from home is to throw (eligible) foods in the compost. Composting may help reduce the harmful gasses that are normally released by decomposing food and the resulting product can be used for a rich plant soil in the garden.

Lastly, focus on improving food purchasing by planning for the food items you need before going to the store. Planning will prevent you from buying things you don't need and having to throw them away later. Planning out your meals at the beginning of every week can also save a lot of money, time, and space.

These are just a few ways that you can incorporate healthy habits while also helping the environment. Try to find the habits that work best for you and your lifestyle!

Sources: <https://www.eatright.org/homefoodsafety/safety-tips/food/produce-from-purchase-to-plate-steps-to-reduce-food-waste> , <https://th.bing.com/th/id/OIP:wV7bWeHazRF1ilbzV8y2-wHaE8?w=250&h=180&c=7&r=0&o=5&pid=1.7>



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Food Safety: Spring Cleaning

Written by Emma Sommers, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics 2024

Spring is on the way, which means it is a great time for cleaning and starting new habits to improve food safety. Even little changes can help reduce the risk of cross contamination and food poisoning. Read the following tips, and pick a couple to try this spring!

Kitchen Surfaces/ Refrigerator

- Bacteria can be found in many places in the kitchen like countertops, utensils, appliances, and cutting boards. Wipe these surfaces down with hot, soapy water.

- Make sure to clean all of the above surfaces regularly, especially before and after prepping food.

- Keep the temperature of the refrigerator below 40 F to prevent the growth of bacteria.



Shelf Life

- Check expiration dates on foods in the refrigerator regularly, to avoid having spoiled food in the fridge.

- Check for spoiled foods in the pantry or in the refrigerator. If there are spoiled foods, throw them out, so the harmful bacteria does not spread to other foods nearby.

Sources: <https://www.eatright.org/homefoodsafety/four-steps/wash/spring-cleaning-101>

3-Can Chili

Ingredients (6 servings)

- 1 15.5 ounce *Can Beans** (pinto, kidney, red, or black)
- 1 15 ounce *Can Corn** (or 10 ounce package of frozen corn)
- 1 15 ounce can of crushed or *Diced Tomatoes**, undrained
- Chili Powder (to taste)

Directions

1. Pour all 3 cans into a pan
2. Add chili powder to taste
3. Stir to mix the contents
4. Continue to stir over medium heat until heated thoroughly
5. Enjoy! Refrigerate leftovers.



Nutrition Facts (per serving)

Calories: 129
Protein: 6g
Carbs: 27g
Fat: 1g

Sources: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/3-can-chili> , <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/usda-foods-available-list-tefap?msclkid=e2c94235aab011eca7d49d680e3967c1>

* foods included in TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)

Eating Right: Using in-season produce to make colorful plates

Written by Kaitlan Tracy, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics '23

A balanced plate has a variety of colors and food groups. The reason a balanced plate is important is because it helps you to get all essential nutrients and vitamins from the foods you eat. Color within fruits and vegetables is from antioxidants and phytochemicals. These compounds are necessary to ensure that your body is able to function to the best of its ability. Eating fruits and vegetables rich in these compounds regularly can reduce the risk of certain diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, stroke, and cancer.

Consuming fruits and vegetables that are in-season makes it easier to create a colorful plate. Choosing produce that is in-season may also mean tastier food, because fruits and vegetables often taste even better in their growing season. Spring is a great time to focus on eating fresh foods and creating a balanced, colorful plate.

- This spring, focus on eating fruits, such as **apricots, grapefruits, cherries, kiwi, mango, and pineapple.**
- Spring ready vegetables include **beetroot, artichoke, carrots, kale, spinach, asparagus, sweet onions, mushrooms, and more.**

Meals and snacks with a colorful balance can be quick, easy, and inexpensive. For example, a mango-pineapple smoothie or a juiced grapefruit can make a quick nutritious snack that provides color and vitamins. Sauteeing a variety of vegetables in a pan together, such as beetroot, carrots, kale, and sweet onions, is a great way to keep many colors and nutrients in your meals.

For more meal inspiration, visit [FruitsAndVeggies.org](https://www.fruitsandveggies.org) or visit [MyPlate.com](https://www.myplate.com) or [PickYourOwn.org](https://www.pickyourown.org) for more information on in-season fruits and vegetables for this spring





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This newsletter is edited by Adina Miller and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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In The News: Earth Day is April 22nd

IN THE NEWS

Written by Adina Miller, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics/Nutrition Fitness and Health 2024

Earth Day is a great time to celebrate nature, and try to make habits that are environmentally friendly. One way to do this is by lessening your foodprint. A foodprint is a measurement of how growing, producing, transporting, and storing food changes the environment. So, the smaller a foodprint is, the less impact and harm there is on the environment. How can someone lessen their foodprint?

Here are some more tips for being environmentally friendly when cooking at home:

- Unplug appliances like toasters or coffeemakers when you are not using them to save energy.
- Use cloth napkins, real silverware, and real dishes that can be reused for each meal, so you have less plastic or paper waste.
- Load the dishwasher until it is completely full, so you run the machine less times.



Sources: <https://www.earthday.org/our-foods-impact/> , <https://www.earthday.org/campaign/foodprints-for-future/> , <https://www.earthday.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/corn-96715-1024x683.jpg>