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Single-use products

Zoology Department Green Impact Team

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Single-use products represent an estimated 50% of marine litter, which is only predicted to increase over time.

There are lots of alternatives already available, with more coming out every year!

Here we have highlighted some single-use products commonly used in the department and the home, and highlighted the two areas at home you likely use the most single-use products, the **kitchen** and **bathroom**. Not every alternative will suit everyone,, but it's important to keep reflecting on how you can make your lifestyle more sustainable. These alternatives will likely cost more than their single-use counterpart, but the trick is how much they save you in the long-run, not just in the purchase but also in the fuel and packaging used when re-purchasing, making them not only sustainable but also cost-effective.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the Green Team at: ea483@cam.ac.uk

'Single Out' campaign

The Cambridge Sustainability team is running a campaign to encourage staff and students to reduce single-use product waste, you can find out more [here](#).

When is it not appropriate to use multi-use products?

In short this comes down to hygiene and safety. If the risk of contamination is high or a product is not designed to be used multiple times, it's probably best to keep using it as a single-use product, but dispose of it appropriately.

Single-use in the department

Single-use products in the department

95% of the waste produced at the university is from 10 single-use products, including; paper, disposable gloves, cardboard, tea and coffee cups, and food packaging.

If we work together we can reduce the amount of single-use waste we produce. Talk to your manager/PI about any ideas, or you can try to cut out one single-use product from the office each month.

The office and department buildings

Paper is generally used when printing. Think carefully, 'does this need printing?' Many documents can be edited and notes made on laptops or tablets to save on paper. The same goes for posting letters, think 'could this be an email or a phone call instead?'

One of the most commonly thrown away single-use products is water bottles. Reusable water bottles have been around for a while now, there are many different styles and can be personalised to your taste.

Many tea and coffee cups in the department are compostable. They should be put in the general waste bins, not recycling. However even compostable coffee cups can take a long time to break down, consider switching to a reusable alternative. Again there are many styles available, even collapsible cups for those with limited space.

Single-use in the home

Kitchen

Cling film is often contaminated with food, alternatives include: tupperwares, foil (more easily cleaned), wax wraps, silicon and cotton wraps.

Baking paper and foil can be replaced with reusable silicone baking sheets, which are now very cheap (and even sold in pound shops).

Kitchen roll cannot be recycled after use, but can be replaced with washable alternatives, such as cotton/bamboo towels, or old clothes you cut up into rags.

Bathroom

Cotton buds have reusable alternatives, though you should think carefully about what you need them for. You can use fabric pads to clean small areas.

Cotton balls and pads can be replaced with machine washable bamboo/cotton pads, or alternatively your hands can be just as good as a pad at wiping products on your skin.

Menstrual products can be an uncomfortable subject, but there are reusable alternatives, including: menstrual cups, reusable pads, menstrual underwear, and reusable tampon applicators.