



Eco-shopping: Shopping with the Environment in Mind

Eco-shopping at the grocery store is the practice of making purchasing decisions based on the environmental impact of a product. It is about asking the question “Is there a more environmentally friendly alternative that would meet my needs?”

The average American throws out their weight in packaging every 30 to 40 days. One out of every \$10 spent at the grocery store pays for packaging. The key to Eco-shopping is to believe that our choices in the marketplace do matter! Every time we buy a product that is better for the environment, we are sending a message to the manufacturer that the environment is important.

How do you eco-shop?

1. Think about what you need. The best way to avoid impulse buying or buying things that you don't need is to take a list to the grocery store and stick to it. It can also help you save money. Ask the question, “Do I really need it?” If the answer is yes, ask if there is an alternative that would be more environmentally responsible.
2. Reduce waste. The easiest way to reduce waste is not to buy it. Avoid products that are over packaged and learn how to distinguish packaging that is used to protect health from packaging that is used for marketing purposes.
3. Buy recyclable. Try to buy items that are recyclable in your community and items that are packaged in recyclable materials.
4. Buy reusable items. Try to buy durable items that can be reused. For example reusable food storage containers are more durable than plastic bags.
5. Buy recycled content. Recycling is a closed-loop cycle. To close the loop we must not only recycle but we must also buy products that are made from recycled materials. Look for items and packaging that state clearly in writing that they are made from recycled materials. The more post-consumer content the better.

Why is eco-shopping important?

Eco-shopping reduces our dependence on valuable landfill space, saves natural resources, reduces pollution, saves energy and in many cases can save money.