

Reduce waste while shopping

You probably don't go to the store saying, "I think I'll buy some garbage today." But depending on which products you choose, that is at least partly what you're doing. By purchasing stuff that's over-packaged, disposable or of poor quality, your cash can soon end up as trash.

Get the most out of what you buy

Nothing lasts forever. The things we buy today will eventually become waste in the future. Here are some questions to ask before you buy to protect your investment and prevent wasting time and money.



- **Is it reliable?** Ask the "experts" — people or organizations who have tested or repaired the product you want to buy. Evaluate the repair history of that product.
- **Compare warranties.** A longer warranty suggests that the manufacturer feels confident that it will last longer.
- **How long do you need it?** Are you purchasing a less reliable product because it's inexpensive and you don't want to invest in something that you'll rarely use?
- **Can I rent or borrow?** Why buy—and store—items that you may only use a few times. Some of the most commonly rented items are trailers, lawn care equipment, tables and chairs, ladders, power tools, tents and tree trimming equipment. You could also borrow items from friends or family to avoid purchasing.

What does it really cost? The purchase price is not the same as the cost to use and maintain a product. The longer you own something, the less it costs over time.

- **Can I repair or upgrade it?** Buying products that are easy to repair or improve will make your initial investment last longer.

Paper NOR plastic

Looking for an easy way to change the way you shop? Reduce the waste you create when you bring home your purchases. Use these tips to reduce your baggage.



you want to reuse.

- **Store the bag in your car** and put it back when you're done. While you're at it, stuff some old shopping bags in there, too! Paper or plastic, reuse is fantastic!
- **Get several reusable bags** — you'll probably need more than one, and you're going to get hooked on their convenience and general awesomeness.
- **Make a note:** Remind yourself to use that bag with a line on your shopping list or a sticky note on your car's dashboard.
- **Get in the habit.** Challenge yourself to use a reusable bag for your next five shopping trips.
- **Be prepared:** If there's a bagger at checkout, let them know ahead of time that you have your own bag that

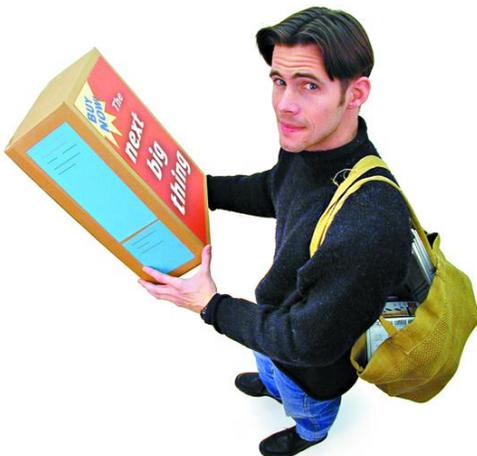
Beyond the bag

Are you wondering what you'll do without paper and plastic bags? These helpful tips can help you move beyond the bag.

- Did you know that most recycling collectors allow you to use reusable containers instead of paper bags. Ask your local recycler if you can use alternatives like plastic waste baskets, 5-gallon buckets, or storage totes.
- Put out only full bags on recycling day. Combine your half bag with a neighbor's.
- Instead of pulling out the bag liner in your wastebasket, dump the contents into a bigger container on trash day.

Don't let good food go to waste

Here in Minnesota, the average household in St. Paul wastes almost \$100 worth of food every month. This is bad for our wallets — and for the environment.



Bulk up

Individual packages will save you lots of money and reduce waste! Packaging makes up 30% of the weight and 50% of trash by volume. Buy juice, snacks, and other lunch items in bulk and use those reusable containers each day.

Be aware of double-packaging - some "bulk packages" are just individually wrapped items packaged yet again and sold as a bulk item

Shop secondhand

Bring out your inner fashionista and shop reused first. Whether you shop thrift, consignment or vintage you can find quality reused merchandise at budget-friendly prices. Visit ReUSEmn.org or Hennepin County's



Recycle, then buy recycled

Hundreds of Minnesota businesses make products out of recycled materials. When you buy recycled you are helping the local economy and the environment. Learn more, visit

Search for products at

Ask for an e-receipt

Checking your cash register receipts can help you keep your money safe, but did you know that it can also expose you to bisphenol A, also known as BPA? Recent research shows that the chemical can be absorbed through your skin by handling receipts. BPA is used in many thermal receipt papers as a color developer that emerges when heated.