

## **HK's Plastic Waste Epidemic and How You Can Help**

Did you know that up to 2,000 tonnes of plastic is thrown out in Hong Kong each day? Our landfills are overflowing with unnecessary plastic packaging and plastic waste. More than 80 million tonnes of plastic waste ends up in our seas and oceans, killing marine life and making its way into the marine and human food chains. Only a small percentage of all plastic in Hong Kong actually gets recycled, so reducing our consumption is critical.

We can all do our part and take action. Here are some tips for reducing your plastic waste:

1. **Chose not to buy items wrapped in plastic.** Select unwrapped fruit, vegetables and other items. Don't let cashiers put food items in plastic bags at checkout.
2. Don't buy beverages bottles in plastic. Glass is great.
3. **Carry a reusable bottle or cup** for coffee and tea, and other beverages, when you are out and about.
4. **Stop using plastic straws.** When ordering drinks, say "no straw please!" Plastic-free HK (<https://www.plasticfreehk.com/>), a local organization, sells metal and glass straws with cleaning brushes. Biodegradable ones are available at [www.last-straw.org](http://www.last-straw.org).
5. **Switch to glass or metal food containers.** They are safer - plastic can leach toxic chemicals into our food and drinks. Most HK restaurants will now serve you take-out in your own container if you bring it. You can find containers at many stores. Plastic-free HK has a range of reusable containers and bamboo cutlery kits that fit neatly in your bag, as well as other environmentally-responsible products.
6. **Invest in a water filter and reusable water bottle.** There is a large selection of water filters at Wing On Department store.
7. **Always carry a reusable bag with you, and opt for reusable cotton bags** instead of plastic. Lots of shops and supermarkets sell cheap cotton bags, but Muji has some seriously smart ones (around HK\$200).
8. **Shopping Tips:** Make your own bread. Buy bread from bakeries that package in paper. Buy farm fresh eggs in reusable paper containers. Buy your meat from the deli and have it wrapped in paper. Buy bulk cereal, bring your own paper bags. Buy tortilla chips packaged in paper bags. Buy bulk coffee packaged in paper or in cans, or bring your own bags. Buy milk in paper cartons.
9. **Use bar soap** to wash your hands, body and dishes. Dr. Bronner's is perfect.
10. **Switch to natural deodorants/antiperspirants.**
11. **Do not use air fresheners.** Light a candle or incense instead.
12. **Buy toilet paper that is wrapped in paper, not plastic.**
13. **Don't use ziploc.** If you need to keep things like half an onion (happens to us all the time!) use reusable waxy paper.
14. **Support local restaurants that operate sustainably.** Not only is the food delicious and more sustainable, but these restaurants and food providers are committed to work towards zero waste; Grassroots Pantry, Homegrown Foods, MANA!, Green Common, Frites, La Cabane, Locofama, teakha and Twins Kitchen.
15. **Try soap bars and shampoo bars.** They last longer and are more environmentally responsible. Lush has a great selection, and Bella Sapone and Plastic-free HK are also good local options.

Note: This document includes tips for how you can take action but the merchants named are not endorsed by The Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong (CanChamHK).

16. **Make your own cleaning products** that will be less toxic and eliminate the need for multiple plastic bottles of cleaner. Baking soda and vinegar instead of cleaners packaged in plastic. Check eartheasy.com for homemade solutions.
17. **DIY Toothpaste** is easy to make, and tastes great too.
18. **Switch to a bamboo toothbrush.** Manning's just started carrying them and they're great!
19. **Give up gum.** Gum is made of a synthetic rubber, aka plastic.
20. **Buy cloth diapers.** Many great varieties available and better for your baby. We fill a super bowl stadium size hole every day with disposal diapers that leach toxins into the environment for centuries to come.
21. **If you see marine pollution – report it with this App –** (*link to be added*)
22. **Sign up a team for The Hong Kong Cleanup Challenge:** [www.HKcleanup.org](http://www.HKcleanup.org)

For more information and tips, check out these links:

<http://hkcleanup.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/HKCleanup/>

<http://www.ecozine.com/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Ecozinemagazine/>

[Zero Waste Hong Kong 零廢棄香港](#)

<http://www.oceanrecov.org/>

<http://bit.ly/StreamsOfPlastic>

<https://www.plasticoceans.org/> and <https://www.plasticoceans.org/the-facts/>

<http://plasticfreeseas.org/index.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/SeaShepherdHK/>

<http://zerowastehongkong.com/>

<http://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/health-beauty/article/1942998/5-ways-every-hongkonger-can-help-reduce-plastic-waste>

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/2022009/stop-talking-trash-and-get-tough-plastic-waste>

<http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20170427-hong-kong-has-a-monumental-waste-problem>

<http://www.wwf.org.hk/en/news/featuredstories/?11940/>

<https://www.facebook.com/makeachangeworld/videos/1331817446873469/>

<http://plastic.scaquarium.org/solutions-for-a-world-without-the-waste-footprint/>

<https://www.eiuperspectives.economist.com/sustainability/plastic-pollution-akin-broken-windows-theory>

<http://www.triplepundit.com/2016/08/new-plastics-sustainability-report-greenwash/>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2017-05-16/plastic-pollution-on-henderson-island-in-south-pacific/8527370>

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