



The Food Bites

Going GREEN!

October 2009

Do the right thing most of the time.

This timeless advice applies to many areas of life: healthy living, eating well and also being environmentally friendly.

Green is the buzzword we've all become accustomed to and we're here to offer some reminders & tips to help make being green easier. Sharing and modelling these suggestions for your children will help set their healthy environmental habits from an early age as well.

1. **Be aware** – know which items are placed in the blue box, green bin and garbage in your area. Municipalities usually provide a quick reference guide which can be posted on the fridge.
2. **Reduce** – wherever possible. For example:
 - Use shopping lists to help purchase only what you need each week.
 - Turn off the lights or TV when not in the room.
 - Install water saving gadgets.
3. **Reuse** – invest in items that will last you longer or be creative and find new uses for used things. Some ideas include:
 - Invest in cloth bags for shopping.
 - Cut the lid off plastic egg cartons and use them to pour out paint for your kids.
 - Use empty jars, cut cereal boxes or decorated tin cans to store household items or children's craft supplies.
4. **Recycle** – before tossing something in the garbage, see if it can be recycled.
 - Aluminum and paper products are most highly recyclable.
 - Flatten boxes and rinse out cans/containers before putting them in the blue box.

With so much information readily available these days, consumers can make more informed choices. When purchasing items or disposing of things, keep these things in mind:

1. Find out what steps a business takes to be more environmentally friendly. Whenever possible choose and support a supplier you can feel good about.
2. Coffee cups create much debate in the news. When disposing of cups, throw the lid in the garbage and the cup in the blue box. Because of the technology used by most recycling plants, the equipment will not be able to pick up flat items and they will go to the garbage.
3. When buying paper products, look for items with the most post consumer content. The higher the percentage the better. Recycled paper is made from scraps in the mill. Paper with post consumer content is made from already used paper products, which is regenerated into new product.
4. Use compostable bags in your green bin. Compostable bags break down with the food products in the bag. Do this test: how do you know something is compostable? Bury a compostable bag and a plastic bag in your backyard. After 30 days, dig the bags up and see what is left. The compostable bag made up of natural materials will start to disintegrate while the plastic bag will be the same as before.
5. All plastic is petroleum based and takes hundreds of years to break down. Oil is a non-renewable resource and when oil prices are higher, plastic prices are higher as well. The recyclable rates for plastic is lower than paper or aluminum.



Plastic with PET (Polyethylene terephthalate) is most recyclable and commonly used for water bottles and beverage & food containers.

Sources: Markham Waste Management, Wikipedia

Eco-friendly lunches from Kid's Kitchen

During this past summer we at Kid's Kitchen have spent a considerable amount of time doing in-depth research on how to offer eco-friendly lunches.

We have spoken to all types of suppliers – paper, plastic, aluminum, Styrofoam – finding out where the packaging comes from, how well it can hold hot or cold food and how well it can be recycled or not.

We contacted the mayor's office of Markham who put us in touch with key people with Markham Waste Management. We have learnt a lot and will continue to share this information with our schools, students and parents.

Due to the volumes we serve, we must use disposable packaging. But we are proud to report that the majority of our packaging is recyclable. We are meeting our goal for our lunches to be 90-95% waste free. Over the course of the year, we will be working with each school we service to instruct students on the best practices for disposal of lunch packaging.



DID YOU KNOW?

The paper lunch bags used by Kid's Kitchen have at least 70% post consumer waste content, saving thousands of trees over the course of a year.