



Queenswood Sustainable Future Centre HR6 OPY  
Open 10.30am – 3.30pm Saturdays

## Plastic reduction practical tips - Bathroom

Plastic sticks around in the environment for ages, threatening wildlife and spreading toxins. Plastic also contributes to global warming (almost all plastics are made from chemicals that come from the production of planet-warming fuels like gas, oil and even coal).

More and more people are cutting down on the amount of plastic they use. These tips will help you avoid household plastics that can end up in our seas – harming our dolphins, turtles and other wildlife too. And they'll enhance your life by saving you cash and avoiding aggressive chemicals.

### Ways to avoid plastics in the bathroom

#### Biodegradable cotton buds

Cotton buds are largely made of plastic, thanks to their polypropylene stem. They're one of the top 10 items found on beaches by volunteers for the Marine Conservation Society. People often wrongly flush them down the toilet and they end up passing through the sewage system and into the sea. They can be deadly to the unfortunate marine life that ingest them. So why not buy wooden ones instead!

#### Plastic-free bars in the bathroom

Showering and hand-washing are things most of us (we hope!) do multiple times each day. When it comes to what gets our bodies in a lather there's tonnes of choice, from gels and milks to soap bars and bath bombs. What many of these products have in common is the plastic packing: the bottles, tubs, tubes and pots they often come in. Factor in daily use and that can add up to a heck of a lot of plastic - especially if you're part of a large family.

Steer clear of liquid shower gels and hand wash. Instead switch to solids, replacing these products with bars of soap. And because bar soap doesn't contain as high a proportion of water as shower gels or liquid soaps, bar soap tends to last a lot longer and is more cost effective.

Here are top tips for purchasing bar soaps:

- Choose a soap in minimal packaging (avoiding plastic).
- Choose a natural soap, avoiding chemical ingredients.
- Avoid soaps made with palm oil to limit the environmental land impact.
- Buy from local farmers' markets or independent shops where possible to reduce transportation carbon footprint.

#### Plastic-free shampoos and conditioners

Like hand soaps and shower gels, single-use plastic tends to be the default packaging for most shampoos and conditioners. And, just like hand soap and shower gels, if you're looking to cut plastic out of your hair care routine entirely, buying bar versions of both shampoo and conditioner is the simplest way to go.

The pros of using bar shampoo and conditioners to wash hair are pretty much the same as for your hands or the shower – no plastic (and much less packaging altogether), much longer-lasting, lower carbon footprint for transporting the product, and fewer chemical ingredients.

For many beauty enthusiasts, the lower chemical content of shampoo bars is an additional benefit, as most shampoo bars are "sulphate-free".

Sulphates /sulfates (Sodium Laureth Sulfate, Sodium Lauryl Sulfate, or Ammonium Laureth Sulfate on your shampoo bottle) are among the most widely used ingredients in shampoo products. They're what make your shampoo and shower gel "lather" and foam. They are "primary surfactants" which basically means they contain molecules that attract both water and oil, which makes them very efficient at separating dirt and oil from your hair and allowing water to wash them away. In fact, sulphates are sometimes so efficient at cleaning away dirt and oil from your hair and skin, that they end up stripping away natural oils needed to keep them healthy. They can also aggravate the skin, particularly in those with dry skin conditions such as eczema.

## Buying in bulk and recycled plastics

Bulk buying is a great way to ease into reducing your plastic consumption. Not only does it cut the total amount of plastic you consume, it also reduces the carbon footprint of shipping the products. Even better if you can bulk buy from brands that use recycled plastic.

## Plastic-free loo roll

Finding recycled toilet paper that also doesn't come in plastic packaging can be tricky. Many supermarkets produce recycled or "eco" toilet paper, but despite the green credentials of the actual product, the irony is that they inevitably come wrapped in single-use plastic. Make sure you check the packaging in-store to see if recycled (recyclable) or biodegradable packaging is on offer.

If you're struggling to find a recycled plastic alternative for your loo roll wrapping in your local supermarket, buying in bulk (or the largest size available in the supermarket) can help reduce plastic waste. But if you're keen to go completely plastic-free in this department, there are a number of online options. See <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/plastics/beauty-and-beast-plasticfree-bathroom>.

## Plastic-less toothbrushes and toothpaste

Keeping those pearly-whites shining can be a nightmare for the plastic-avoider. Our twice daily habit (particularly if we use a disposable toothbrush) could be sending thousands of tonnes of single-use plastic to landfill each year.

Luckily there are quite a few options to cut down on toothbrush-related plastic waste.

Try a biodegradable bamboo toothbrush. The market for bamboo products has exploded in recent years and there are now quite a few bamboo toothbrushes to choose from, although you'd be hard pressed to find one in your local supermarket aisles. (They are available for sale in the Queenswood shop).

Finally, these options don't work for you, a conventional toothbrush or electric toothbrush with replaceable head (rather than throwing away the whole thing) will reduce single-use plastic consumption.

Sourced from: <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/plastics/living-without-plastic>