



Tip of the Month

September 2010

Litterless Lunches

September's here, which means it's time to pack up your lunch and head back to school or the office. Instead of taking a pre-packaged lunch, take a litterless one! Food is packaged to preserve and increase the shelf life; however, this can also reduce the food's nutritional content and create unnecessary waste. In many cases, food packaging is thrown in the garbage because it cannot be recycled. Litterless lunches are becoming increasingly popular with children and adults alike. Here are some tips on how to make your lunch litterless:

- Invest in a lunch box or bag that can be easily washed and reused, instead of packing your lunch in a disposable plastic or paper bag.
- Contain your food in reusable plastic, glass or stainless steel containers. When looking into plastic food containers, purchase BPA-free plastics. Bisphenol-A (BPA) is a chemical used in the production of polycarbonate plastics (#7). These plastics are used to make rigid containers and bottles. Over time, BPA from plastic containers can leech into your food or drink. BPA is suspected of being an endocrine disrupter, as it may mimic estrogen.
- Avoid using non-recyclable plastic cutlery and bring your own reusable cutlery.
- Instead of using paper napkins, pack a cloth napkin in your lunch bag.
- Carry around a reusable BPA-free water bottle, such as ones offered by Klean Kanteen.
- Buy food in bulk to avoid unnecessary packaging from single-serve containers and pouches (i.e. yogurt or crackers).
- Put aside any leftovers for a later snack or save them for your home compost.
- Don't trash your beverage containers; instead take them to your local bottle depot for recycling and deposit refund. Ready-to-drink beverages are included in a recycling program and can be dropped off at a number of depots across the province. Did you know milk and milk substitute containers are also accepted at many of the same bottles depots? For more information on both programs or to locate the nearest drop-off location, call the RCBC Recycling Hotline or visit www.encorp.ca.
- Looking to cater an office meeting or a special event? Try a "green" catering company, such as the Vancouver-based [One Planet Catering](#). They have adopted a "zero waste" policy by composting all organic waste and eliminating packaging waste. They also donate 5% of their food and beverage sales to an environmental or social cause.

For additional information, contact the RCBC Recycling Hotline, Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm at 604-RECYCLE (Lower Mainland) or 1-800-667-4321 (province-wide).

Need more information?

Contact the **RCBC Recycling Hotline!**

Lower Mainland: 604-732-9253 | BC Toll-Free: 1-800-667-4321

Hours: Monday-Friday 9am-4pm

Recyclepedia: www.rcbc.bc.ca