



Association pour la santé environnementale du Québec  
Environmental Health Association of Québec

## ECO-JOURNAL



### Reduce Plastic Use amidst COVID-19 Pandemic



Blue skies, breathable air in cities and animals roaming in urban centers... these last weeks of confinement demonstrated that as human activities slow down, nature is able to breathe. And yet, with the beginning of the global pandemic our consumption of plastic just went to the roof, and all the victories and advances to remove some plastic out of our lives seems forgotten. In order to protect our food and our health, plastic comes back stronger than ever: masks, gloves, wrappings, plastic bags... while some studies showed that COVID-19 seems to survive longer on some materials<sup>1</sup>, such as plastic, than others. In the midst of a pandemic, your health has to remain your priority, and reducing your plastic waste is still very much possible. Here are some of our ideas.

#### Reusable masks

Let's start with the most important one: masks. Wearing a mask is essential to protect yourself and your loved ones, and they do not have to be single use. Reusable masks are made of fabric, which allows you to wash and reuse them, and which give them many advantages: no need to run from a drug store to another every now and then to find masks that will end up as trash in the streets and sewers... or in our oceans. You will also make serious savings as masks' price increased tremendously since the beginning of the pandemic. Even though you can buy these masks, Greenpeace published an article on how to make your own mask<sup>2</sup>.



#### Avoid individual packaging

Oftentimes, avoiding plastic packaging, be it pre- or post-pandemic, is generally difficult and sometimes even impossible. When faced with this problem, the second-best option is to choose products with bulk packaging over individual ones, thus reducing your plastic waste. Yogurt is an example: look for the big pots over the individual portions

### Solid soap over liquid soap

Solid soap is also another simple ecological alternative. Whether it be body soap or shampoo, solid soap is just as efficient in fighting germs, cost effective, and, bonus point, does not come with a plastic bottle! For our more motivated members, you can make home-made solid soap<sup>3</sup>, thus controlling the ingredients, and many recipes can be found online.

### Be smart about your deliveries

During the confinement, restaurants closed or remained open only for delivery. Sometimes, it is tempting to treat yourself and order a nice meal. Some restaurants have adopted these black (with a transparent cap) containers, which are washable and reusable, so try to avoid ordering deliveries from restaurants that you know will come in single-use plastic containers. If you are not sure, try calling the restaurant to ask what type of container they use.

### Say goodbye to plastic wrap

Plastic wrap is another type of single use plastic that we should all ban from the kitchen, and it is really easy. There are many options: containers, silicone lids, and bee wax wraps. Containers are always a solution: instead of putting a plastic wrap on your dish, put it in a container that you can. If this is not an option, there are silicone lids, which are stretchable to fit to your needs, and reusable. Finally, the gold medal for the eco-friendliest solution goes to the bee wax wraps: made from a piece of cotton cloth and bee wax, they are just as efficient as plastic wraps... but plastic free! Washable and reusable, they can also be home-made<sup>4</sup>!



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Good luck in your quest towards a zero-plastic lifestyle!



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## Recipes:

3 - COOP COCO, *How to make cold process soap?*

<https://blogcoopcoco.ca/en/cold-process-soap-recipe-beginner/>

4 - Good Housekeeping, *How to make DIY beeswax food wraps for plastic-free kitchen,*

<https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/home/craft-ideas/g25642328/diy-beeswax-reusable-wraps/>

2 - Greenpeace, *How to make an upcycled fabric face mask,*

<https://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/story/30458/how-to-make-an-upcycled-fabric-face-mask/>

## To go further...

1 - Forbes, *The Amount Of Plastic Waste Is Surging Because Of The Coronavirus Pandemic,*

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/lauratenenbaum/2020/04/25/>

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<https://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/story/30691/>

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<https://www.insider.com/is-bar-soap-better-than-liquid-soap>

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RS7IzU2VJIQ>