

JULY SUSTAINABILITY CHALLENGE

Reducing the Top 5 Single-Use Plastics

WEEK 2



MOVE FORWARD

Through this challenge, we're trying to implement different, more sustainable habits. If you happen to forget to ask for no plastic cutlery with your takeout order, forgive yourself and move forward. Try to think about what you could do differently next time to make sure you remember.

This week we'll focus on using reusable cutlery and other options to ziploc bags. Next week, we'll discuss the other three actions.

REUSABLE CUTLERY

Why is it important to use reusable cutlery? See below for a few reasons on why you should make this a priority. This can be a fairly easy switch!

- **NOT RECYCLABLE** – While plastic cutlery should be recyclable, their inconsistent material and odd shapes prevent them from being recycled.
- **CHEMICALS** – Plastic cutlery can have harmful chemicals on them that can leach into your food (see Chapter 4 in Plastics & Health).
- **LOTS OF OPTIONS FOR SWITCHING** – The easiest way to switch to using reusable cutlery is to use something you already have. However, if you would like to purchase a travel set, there are lots of options including stainless steel and bamboo.
- **SAFER** – During this pandemic, you can handle your own eating utensils.

ALTERNATIVES TO ZIPLCS

Ziploc bags are inexpensive and convenient, so using less or none at all may take some effort. Here are a few strategies to help you.

- **THINK DIFFERENTLY** – Instead of using a ziploc bag, try using items you may already have such as food storage containers. You could even reuse glass jars from food you buy such as pickle jars.
- **USE ALTERNATIVES** – For those situations where you really need a ziploc, use reusable alternatives. This article sums up several options. Have kids? Here is one mom's way of using all reusables for school.
- **REUSE DISPOSABLES** – If you do use a disposable bag, do your best to reuse the ziploc at least once.

SHARE

What challenges are you facing as you strive to reduce your single-use plastics? Let us know by emailing us at sustainability@unthsc.edu. We will try to address them in future weeks.