

# Reducing Food Waste

## 6 Steps for Climate Action in Your Kitchen!

The Canadian government and the United Nations aim to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030. We can do our part to support this climate action!



Average Canadian households waste 140 kilograms of food a year at an annual cost of \$1,100. Discarded food sent to landfill emits methane when it decomposes, a greenhouse gas (GHG) 20 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>.

Diverting food waste away from landfill sites - with composting and Green Bin programs - helps alleviate the problem of GHG, but fails to address the amount of food waste overall and its climate impact. When food that could have been eaten ends up in our Green Bins or composters, we waste the energy and resources that were invested in growing, harvesting, processing, and transporting it.

Food waste occurs in households for several reasons, including: over purchasing, lack of meal planning, misunderstanding "best before" or "expired" dates, reluctance to eat leftovers.

Why do so many of us buy more food than we can possibly eat in a short timeframe? Grocery shelves are stocked abundantly. Shortages are unheard of. Buyers are encouraged to take advantage of lower prices on multiple purchases of the same item. Foods are sometimes thrown out simply because they are no longer usable after sitting long forgotten in a refrigerator or a cupboard. Shopping without a meal plan can lead to impulsive purchases with no thought given to when and how such items will be consumed. They are then easily forgotten and ultimately discarded when they are no longer usable.

### A family can avoid the above scenario by planning ahead, and experimenting with these six steps:

# 1

**Try keeping an inventory of all food and staples already purchased**, so you're more aware of using all foods in a timely manner. You can also find various simple inventory methods online. You can have a chart on the fridge door, or use a marker to write dates on packaging or fridge drawers, even devise your own inventory system

# 2

**Plan meals using ingredients you have on hand.** Make it a fun challenge to adapt favourite recipes to these ingredients. Be creative. Check the internet for simple, nutritious dishes, again using what you have on hand, and you'll make meals that are easy and quick to prepare, thereby minimizing your purchases

# 3

**Why not have a leftovers meal every week?** Choose foods from your pantry and/or freezer that you will use during a given week; decide how you will integrate these items in your meal plan; learn how to change taste by adding legumes (pulses), vegetables, herbs and spices

# 4

**Develop time saving habits by making better use of your freezer, slow cooker and other kitchen appliances.** Make soup, broth, pasta sauces from scratch, double or triple the recipe and freeze it in batches. Chop extra quantities of onions, celery and garlic, and freeze the surplus for use when you are pressed for time

# 5

**Learn what date labels mean.** Date labels are confusing and many consumers throw out perfectly good food simply because they don't understand date labels. Best-by, Use-by, Sale-by are arbitrary dates stamped by manufacturers, and used by grocery stores, to ensure freshness; they are not an indication that past these dates the food should no longer be eaten.

# 6

**Discard in your backyard composter or Green Bin only food no longer edible.**

On Thursday, April 22, Earth Day 2021, CFUW Stratford will launch its Food Waste Reduction campaign on its social media platforms. There will be regular posts on our Facebook and Instagram accounts (@CFUWStratford) expanding on the six steps presented in this fact sheet. These posts will be mindful of both the nutritional and environmental impact of decisions made and actions taken in our kitchens. We are hoping the campaign will be interactive and we invite your comments, suggestions, and success stories.

Through a campaign that might well extend into the fall, CFUW Stratford aims to raise awareness of the importance of simple steps everyone can follow to reduce food waste, enjoying a healthy diet at a reasonable cost, while protecting our environment and its precious natural resources.

## RESOURCES:

- Love Food Hate Waste Canada  
[LoveFoodHateWaste.ca](http://LoveFoodHateWaste.ca)
- City of Stratford Green Bin Information:  
[stratford.ca/en/live-here/green-bin.aspx](http://stratford.ca/en/live-here/green-bin.aspx)
- Food Waste Challenge, Drawdown Toronto:  
[DrawdownToronto.ca/food-waste-challenge](http://DrawdownToronto.ca/food-waste-challenge)
- CFUW on Facebook & Instagram: @CFUWStratford

Aim to put only  
**UNAVOIDABLE  
FOOD WASTE**  
in your  
Green Bin!



Bones, egg shells,  
vegetable peelings,  
coffee grounds, tea bags