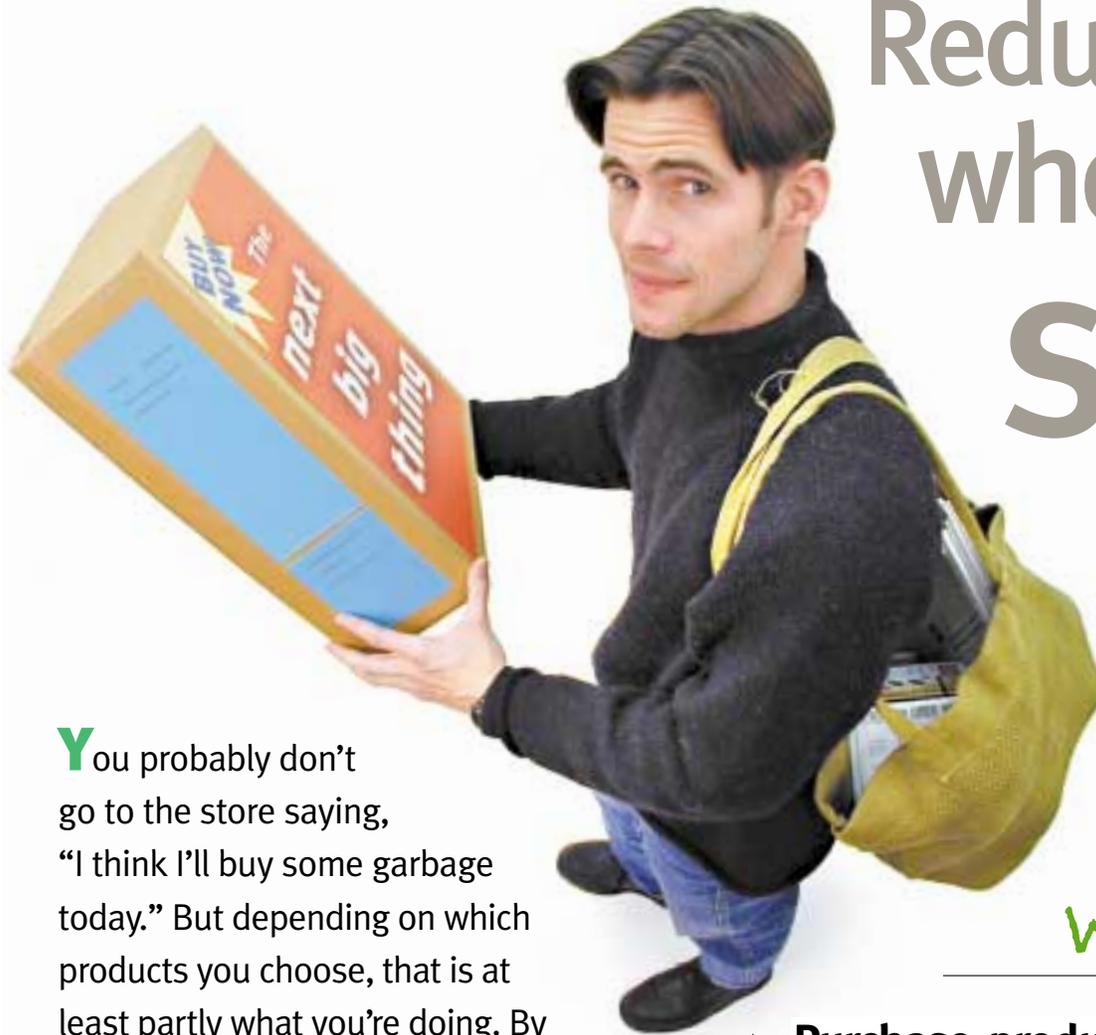




*If not you, who?*



# Reduce trash when you shop

*(and save money at the same time)*

**Y**ou probably don't go to the store saying, "I think I'll buy some garbage today." But depending on which products you choose, that is at least partly what you're doing. By purchasing stuff that's over-packaged, disposable or of poor quality, your cash can soon end up as trash.

And we pay for this garbage again and again — when it's picked up by the garbage haulers, and through your taxes which help pay for things like recycling, landfilling, incineration and clean-up.

Reducing the waste you create through your buying habits helps prevent the costs and hassle of trash. Read on to learn more about how you can make a difference through your shopping.

## What can I do?

### **Purchase products that are returnable, reusable or refillable**

Purchase reusable and refillable containers to use in your home instead of disposable items. Think about ways to reuse items in your home. Look for ways to reduce the amount of trash you throw in the garbage by making good purchasing decisions and looking for ways to reduce.

**Example:** Avoid buying single-use items like paper or plastic plates, cups and disposable silverware. You will spend more money buying these types of items and throwing them away than you would if you used reusable tableware.

**Benefits:** Reusable items eliminate or reduce the number of disposable items thrown away and the costs of disposing of them.



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[www.reduce.org](http://www.reduce.org)

## Get the most out of what you buy

### Purchase products in bulk or with the least amount of packaging



Buy what you need and buy products in bulk containers and concentrates with less packaging. Shop in the bulk aisle at the grocery store for things that you seem to be buying often and have long shelf-lives such as detergents, dog food, pasta, cereal, cleaners and paper products. Buying in bulk will decrease waste and the total cost. Watch out for individually wrapped items that are packaged together and sold as a bulk item. You will be getting a lot more packaging than you were counting on.

Michigan State University School of Packaging conducted a study on the waste reduction benefits of buying less-packaged items. The study suggests that if residents in a city the size of Minneapolis bought the least packaged equivalents of 10 common household products (i.e., cereal, juice, pasta, tuna, etc.), the city could reduce its trash generation by 150,000 tons per year.

**Example:** Next time you go to the store, make a list of what you need. Then look for opportunities to buy in bulk or buy products that have less packaging. Look at a product and think

about how much of what you are paying for will end up in the trash.

**Benefits:** Not only are you saving money, but you won't have to go to the store as often. When you shop smart by buying things in bulk or in concentrate you can reduce the amount of packaging headed to the trash.



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The things we buy today will eventually become waste in the future. Here are some questions to ask before you buy to protect your investment and prevent wasting time and money.

**Is it reliable?** Ask the “experts” — people or organizations who have tested or repaired the product you want to buy. Evaluate the repair history of that product. Compare warranties. A longer warranty often means that the manufacturer feels confident that it will last longer.

**What does it really cost?** The purchase price is not the same as the cost to use and maintain a product. The longer you own something, the less it costs over time.

**Can I repair or upgrade it?** Buying products that are easy to repair will make your initial investment last longer. Upgrading lets you have “state-of-the-art” equipment with less waste.



ELECTRONICS



TOYS



FURNITURE

## Extending the life of your rechargeable devices

do:

- ▶ Read and follow the charging instructions provided with your product. Each charger utilizes a specific strategy to charge the battery.
- ▶ Charge your new battery overnight (14–16 hours) before using it. This is called “initializing” and will enable you to obtain maximum battery capacity.
- ▶ Let a discharged battery cool to room temperature before recharging. A warm battery will signal a thermal cut-off switch to stop the charging process prematurely, and the battery will not get a full charge.



don't:

- ▶ Avoid recharging batteries when they are close to fully charged already. A discharged battery can be detected by a sharp drop in speed or power, or by a reduction in the number of power indicators.
- ▶ Don't return a fully charged battery to the charger for an “extra boost.” This can overcharge the cells and significantly shorten their life-span.
- ▶ Don't use the charger as a stand. Only use the charger if your rechargeable appliance — phone, power tool or electric razor — needs to be fully recharged. Continuous charging will shorten battery life.

Source: Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation

Each month in Minnesota, approximately 572 tons of liquid cleaners and 132 tons of toilet bowl cleaners are washed down the drain.



## Choose the least hazardous cleaning products

With so many choices of products to clean your house, it can be difficult to choose the best one. Instead of buying many different types of cleaners, use one general-purpose cleaner.

Buy cleaning products with the least dangerous signal word: *caution*, *warning*, *danger* or *poison*. Use the least dangerous product to do the job. You can also try home remedies, such as vinegar and water to cut grease and baking soda to scrub stains.

### Become a label reader

Look for key words on labels and choose the least hazardous product.

Less toxic ↑ ↓ More toxic	<b>Caution</b>	mild/moderate
	<b>Warning</b>	moderate hazard
	<b>Danger</b>	extremely flammable, corrosive or highly toxic
	<b>Poison</b>	highly toxic

Source: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

## Apply the tape-measure before the paint.

When buying paint for your home, measure first. Calculate the area to be painted (height x width = total square feet). One gallon of paint covers about 400 square feet. Read labels and choose the least hazardous paint, either low volatile organic compounds (VOC) or water-based paint, stains, finishes and paint stripper when possible. To prevent paint from drying out, cover the paint can with plastic wrap, replace the lid securely and store the paint upside-down. Use stored paint for touch-up jobs or smaller projects. Blend similar colors for larger jobs or use as a primer when the finish is not critical.

**Benefits:** By buying only what you need, you will have less paint to store or dispose of and you'll save money up front by buying less paint in the first place.



Consumer Reports magazine has a broad selection of informational products and services that can help you shop wisely, make informed choices, and save money and time. Consumer Reports can be found at most libraries, magazine stands and bookstores or visit their Web site at [www.consumerreports.org](http://www.consumerreports.org).

## Evaluate the products you buy and use

Look for something in your home that you rarely use. Did you need to buy it or could you have rented or borrowed it? Is it durable? Will you have to buy another one again if it fails? By asking yourself these questions you can save yourself money and time by only buying items you really need.

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## Rent or borrow instead of buying

By renting equipment you can avoid having to purchase items that you may only use a few times. Some of the most commonly rented items are trailers, lawn care equipment, tables and chairs, ladders, power tools, tents and tree-trimming equipment. You could also borrow items from friends or family to avoid purchasing.

**Example:** Rent or borrow items for your family or neighborhood get-together. Churches and schools are great resources for tables and chairs, and tents can be rented from most party rental centers. Renting reusable dishware from banquet halls for events and gatherings can prevent waste from disposable cups, plates, and silverware.

**Benefits:** Renting items saves you money and time, plus it can reduce the amount of trash created by these events. Often the rental center will drop off and pick up the items for you.



*Heavy duty or professional grade equipment can make the task go easier. Renting the right tool keeps it affordable. Why buy something you will need to store but rarely use?*

*Reduce Waste — If not you, who?*

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

[www.reduce.org](http://www.reduce.org)

For more information, contact:



Your county solid waste office is a great resource for waste reduction materials, including local waste and environmental information, education resources and speakers.

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