



## ALTERNATIVES TO PETROLEUM-BASED GOODS

The Gulf disaster has brought into cruel view our dependence on petroleum-based products and made it all too clear how our reliance on oil comes with a heavy cost for us and our environment. Reducing our dependence on oil means burning less gas by carpooling, taking public transportation, bicycling and walking.

But we consume oil in other ways, everyday without even knowing it. Plastic for instance. Items sold with excess plastic packaging only adds to the problem. By choosing petroleum-free products, recycling plastic waste and buying items with recycled content, we can stretch our resources further.

Try to avoid using oil-derived products. Listed below are everyday petroleum-based products and the toxins they contain...along with suggestions for better, healthier alternatives.

**Canned foods**—contain oil based chemical food additives, including sodium benzoate, FD&C red 40 and yellow 5, and Bisphenol-A (BPA), most of which have been associated with various diseases.

**Alternative**—*Whenever possible, buy fresh, organic produce and limit purchases of canned food. Frozen food in recyclable cardboard as well as foods packaged in glass are good alternatives.*

**Crayons**—made with paraffin wax, a petroleum-derived product. Over 12 million crayons are produced every day by one factory alone in the U.S.—this amounts to 60 tons of petroleum-derived crayons DAILY!

**Alternative**—*Natural Beeswax and Soywax crayons, such as Stubby Pencil Studio crayons and Prang crayons.*

**Gum**—Gum was originally made from natural chicle, but now its long-lasting rubbery consistency comes from petroleum-based polymers. Goodyear Tires actually supplies Wrigley's with a large portion of its main ingredients!

***Alternative—a few brands of gum found in health food stores still use natural chicle and no petroleum products.***

Plastic Bags—The production of plastic bags is a petroleum-intensive process, and these non-biodegradable items end up littering our landscapes, oceans, and landfills.

***Alternatives—The UN is calling for a global ban of plastic bags, but in the meantime, it's easy to limit our use of plastic bags at grocery stores and even at the mall. Bring your own reusable bag.***

Vinyl Dolls and Other Toys—Many plastic toys are made from polyvinyl chloride (or PVC), a compound of petroleum products and chlorine, which during the production and incineration result in emissions of carcinogenic dioxin. Also some toys contain petroleum distillates, which if ingested or inhaled can endanger a child's health.

***Alternatives—If you're buying plastic toys, avoid products labeled "vinyl" or "PVC" and make sure plastic toys are labeled "phthalate-free". Otherwise, look for toys and dolls made of unpainted wood, organic cotton or other natural ingredients.***

Plastic Food Storage Containers and Packaging—Almost all of the plastics found in a typical American kitchen are made from petroleum-based polymers. Hormone-disrupting phthalates, used in consumer products to make plastics more pliable, have been associated with birth defects and cancer in lab animals. Also avoid #3 PVC plastics to store food, especially hot, fatty foods, as PVC can leach chemicals, including phthalates.

***Alternatives—Look for products packaged in recycled content and recyclable materials. Use "Bioplastics", or compostable plastics (synthetic polymers) made from renewable resources. Or better yet, use stainless steel products or glass containers, which are long-lived and more readily recyclable than most plastics.***

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