

Personal care routine



When it comes to personal care, there are many small changes you can make that help reduce the amount of “stuff” you have to toss.

Simplify products

Don't let your personal care products take over your counter or cupboards! Some products can serve more than one purpose, and many are unnecessary. Consider cutting back on the number of products you use for your skin, face and hair to save time, money and waste.

If you can, buy soaps or shampoos in bar form or in refillable containers. Many co-ops have bulk sections where you can bring your empty, reusable containers to refill. You can also avoid excess packaging of your toiletries if you learn how to make your own products, including scrubs, moisturizers, and even deodorant.

Reduce waste with medicines



Medications can be a source of trash that is hard to avoid, but there are some reduction options. Look for painkillers or other common over-the-counter medicines that come in recyclable bottles rather than individually packaged pills. Be sure to purchase medicines in quantities you can use before they

expire, and if you do need to throw medicines away, be sure to do it properly by bringing them to a medicine drop box. Find locations and details on using the boxes at hennepin.us/medicine.

When you get sick, use simple home remedies that help alleviate cold symptoms and produce little to no extra waste:

- Gargle with warm salt water or drink warm tea with honey for a sore throat.
- Use a warm washcloth to sooth painful sinuses.
- Breathe warm humid air (from a shower, pot of hot water or humidifier) or prop up your pillow at night to relieve congestion.
- Drink or consume plenty of liquids. Good old chicken soup can help!

Make your own

See recipes starting on page 60 for these bathroom items:

- Shaving cream
- Moisturizer
- Hair care alternatives
- Green cleaners

Oral hygiene



Dentists recommend a new toothbrush every three months, which means the number

of toothbrushes your family tosses out can add up. Check out TerraCycle ([terracycle.com/en-US/brigades/colgate](https://www.terracycle.com/en-US/brigades/colgate)) for recycling options for toothbrushes, toothpaste tubes, and plastic floss packaging. Check to see if any stores near you or anyone you know is already collecting these materials for recycling.

You can also find toothbrushes that are made from recycled or compostable materials. One option is Preserve toothbrushes, which are made from recycled yogurt cups and can be recycled through their mail-in program. Another option is compostable toothbrushes made of wood or bamboo with plastic bristles. Pull out the bristles and compost the handle when you are finished with it. Make sure to only compost wood, bamboo, or certified compostable plastics.

You can make toothpaste at home or buy toothpaste powder or tablets in bulk or recyclable containers. When making your own, buy ingredients in bulk using your own containers and test a small amount first to see if you like it to avoid creating more waste.

Makeup

Reduce what you use

Packaging for cosmetics is often not recyclable because it is either too small for the sorting facilities to capture or composed of more than one material type. Plus cosmetics do expire, so having an extensive selection of makeup inevitably leads to waste. Reduce your cosmetic waste by simplifying what you use. For example, limit what you have on hand to one or two shades of products like eye liner, lipstick, or nail polish.

Make your own or use less-waste options

Making your own cosmetics eliminates packaging waste and reduces the number of ingredients for those with sensitivities. There are many DIY recipes online for lip stains and balms, mascara, blush, and eyeliner. If DIY isn't your thing, buy products in reusable, recyclable or compostable packaging, including metal, cardboard and glass containers. Many brands offer refills for items like eyeshadow, foundation, and lipstick, which reduce waste and cost less. Additionally, some companies, including Aveda, Kiehl's, Lush, MAC Cosmetics and Origins, have packaging take-back programs.

Makeup removal



Skip the packaged facial wipes and cotton pads and use washable cloths or a natural sponge instead. Try using olive or coconut oil to aid in removal.

Razors and shaving cream



Instead of purchasing fully disposable razors, use one where only the head or the blade is replaceable. These blades tend to last much longer than cheaper blades. Take an additional step by learning how to use a safety razor or straight edge blade.

There are also ways you can keep your blades sharper for longer – extending their lifespan. Sharpen, or strop, your blades by following these steps:

- Start with a clean and dry razor and an old pair of jeans
- Place your jeans on a flat surface. Run your razor along your jeans (with the direction of the blades and not against the blades, you don't want to cut into the pants)
- Do this approximately 20 times with quick, short strokes using light pressure

Instead of shaving cream from an aerosol can, try using an olive-oil-based soap or a specific shaving bar soap with a brush. You can also make your own shaving cream from bulk bin products (see the recipes section).

Feminine products



Swap out disposable pads and tampons with products such as menstrual cups or sponges, reusable pads, and/or period underwear. Reusable products are a safe alternative as long as you take care to clean the product as directed. These options are more expensive than disposables up front, but save significant money over time as you reuse them.

Tissues and wipes



Swap out paper tissues and wipes for cloth handkerchiefs and washcloths for everyday use. Keep a clean handkerchief or washcloth with you, or keep a stash of small cloth wipes stocked in a central spot for the whole family to use.

With both tissues and handkerchiefs, make sure to wash your hands after blowing your nose. If you have concerns about spreading germs while someone has the flu or another virus, you can use tissues for the short term and go back to reusables once the illness has passed.

Toilet paper



While toilet paper is generally not something you can avoid using, there are more sustainable options. Look for recycled content paper, bamboo toilet paper, and brands that use little or no plastic packaging. Some families pursuing zero waste install a bidet seat or sprayer to cut down on their toilet paper usage.

Paper bathroom cups

If you use paper or disposable plastic cups, switch them out for reusable ones. Each family member can have a designated color or design. This saves money, and the only extra work is washing a cup or sticking them in the dishwasher.

Liquid soap

The pump dispenser of disposable liquid soap containers cannot be recycled, so buy soap in a bulk bottle (or in bulk with your own reusable container) and pour into your pump bottle. To reduce even more waste, consider switching from liquid soap in a bottle to a bar of soap, which will also help you avoid paying for one of the main ingredients in liquid soap – water.

Liquid shampoo



Although most shampoo bottles are recyclable (minus the pump dispenser), there are options to reduce or eliminate this waste. Think about using less shampoo per wash or washing your hair less often; your body may be producing more oil to replace what you wash out. If you wash your hair

every day, try cutting back to every other day or less, and give your body time to adjust. If this doesn't work for you, consider using a dry shampoo or a shampoo that comes in bar form. You can also try making your own liquid or dry shampoo – there are many recipes online.