

# Try to make 2019 the year you and your family use less plastic

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A beach in Naples, Italy, is covered with plastic waste and debris. What can you do to fight plastic pollution in 2019? Photo by Salvatore Laporta/Getty Images

Making a list of New Year's resolutions is popular with many people. It is a set of goals people make. The hope is to do some things better in the new year.

Usually, these resolutions are about improving themselves. Some people want to exercise more. Others want to save money. Some want to learn new skills.

This year, ask your family or friends to try a group resolution. Consider reducing your waste of plastic products you only use once. This might mean using fewer plastic bags. It might mean thinking twice before getting foods packed in plastic.

Much plastic is used just once and quickly becomes trash. Some plastic goes into the ocean. Scientists estimate that 18 billion pounds of plastic trash flows into the oceans every year.

Here are two ways to use less plastic in 2019 as a family.

## **Decorate With Paper**

Planning a birthday party or holiday celebration? Pledge to have a plastic-free party.

Get creative when decorating. Try not to use balloons. Undersea animals can mistake balloons for food.

Replace balloons with cut-out paper decorations. This could include banners or confetti.

Maybe you were planning to celebrate with glitter. Most glitter is actually just tiny pieces of plastic. Instead, consider buying a natural kind. This will be less wasteful.

### **Bring A Reusable Bag To The Store**

Promise to shop smarter. It is healthier for you and the planet.

Try to avoid snacks that come wrapped in individual plastic. Instead, go to the bulk section of the store. You can usually grab popcorn kernels and banana chips here. Shop with reusable bags for whole fruits and vegetables. Grab some canned beans. Fill a bring-your-own container with grains from the bulk section. Brown rice is an example.

Families can cook a meal free from single-use plastic. Maybe fish is on the menu. If so, read an online guide like Seafood Watch. It shows the practices used to catch that type of fish. Often, fishers leave behind their gear. It falls in the ocean. Knowing the kind of gear used to catch fish can help cut down on harm.

We all want to spend less money. Plastic is a great place to start. Instead of buying new toys, host a toy trade. Swap with your friends.

Do not forget about the plastic packaging. It covers almost all items that you buy online. Consider your plastic resolution when shopping anywhere.

Get creative! Think of ways to give old pieces of plastic a new job. Avoid buying a new item. Use newspaper sleeves to pick up pet poo, for example.

## Quiz

- 1 What does the section "Decorate With Paper" show the reader?
- (A) the kinds of snacks to buy when shopping in a store
  - (B) some ways to spend less money by buying fewer new toys
  - (C) some ways to have a party without using plastic decorations
  - (D) the number of pounds of plastic trash that flows into the oceans
- 2 What information will the reader find in the section "Bring a Reusable Bag To The Store"?
- (A) Most glitter is made of tiny pieces of plastic.
  - (B) Undersea animals sometimes think balloons are food.
  - (C) New Year's resolutions are goals that people make.
  - (D) Seafood Watch gives information about how fish are caught.
- 3 The author thinks that people should bring reusable bags to the store when shopping. Why does the author think this?
- (A) because using reusable bags is a lot of fun to do
  - (B) because using reusable bags is good for the planet
  - (C) because reusable bags can hold foods wrapped in plastic
  - (D) because reusable bags can be thrown away in the trash
- 4 The author writes that "we all want to spend less money. Plastic is a great place to start. Instead of buying new toys, host a toy trade. Swap with your friends."
- How does the author feel about buying new plastic toys?
- (A) It is great to buy new plastic toys for friends.
  - (B) Buying new plastic toys is good if you give them to your friends.
  - (C) Trading toys with friends is better than buying new plastic toys.
  - (D) It is great to buy new plastic toys for a toy trade.