

ONE LESS CUP TOOL

OBJECTIVE:

To encourage staff in your department / unit to use reusable containers for beverages and food instead of single-use disposable containers.

WHY REUSABLE FOOD AND BEVERAGE CONTAINERS

Generally, the initial manufacturing of reusable cups creates a bigger environmental impact than that of disposable cups. However, that impact lessens over time as the reusable cup is used repeatedly. Each reusable cup has a “breakeven point” (the point at which it becomes more environmentally preferable than a disposable cup). After a comparison of the energy and resources needed to produce ceramic coffee mugs and disposable cups, the Environmental Defense Fund has concluded that a reusable ceramic mug is better after only 70 uses; a small task for a daily coffee drinker.

STEPS:

Step 1

- Bring a reusable mug and food container from home to your workplace (or purchase if necessary).
- Use your mug and container instead of disposable containers, especially at meetings!

Step 2

Perform an informal survey prior to implementing the rest of the tool to see how many people are using reusable containers. This will be your baseline.

Step 3

Place posters (One Less Cup and/or Choose to Reuse) around your workplace. Talk to your co-workers and encourage them to use reusable containers where possible. Persuade at least two colleagues to make the commitment. **Remind colleagues that disposable cups used in your unit are for patients only (if appropriate, you may wish to add this reminder to the email below).**

Step 4

Either have your Manager/Director send out Email 1 (below) to let people know about using **One Less Cup** or send the email yourself. You can also bring up the points in the email at a staff meeting. If you would like to provide more information about the environmental benefits of reusable cups and containers, *you can cut and paste the text on page two.*

EMAIL 1 - Subject: One Less Cup

One way we can all contribute to reducing waste is by using reusable mugs and containers for coffee/tea/water/lunch etc.

Disposable containers use large amounts of energy and resources. Furthermore, containers often end up in landfills or in our oceans via storm drains and watersheds. Using a reusable mug and/or container helps to minimize needless waste.

As an added incentive, you may even save money by using a reusable beverage container. Many food service outlets give discounts when you bring your own mug.

I hope you will join me in committing to this one simple act. It will have a big impact!

Step 5

EVALUATION

Check in again after implementation to see if additional colleagues have adopted this behaviour. Please email results to Sarah Currie at sarah.currie@fraserhealth.ca

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Environmental Benefits of Reusable Cups

An environmental life cycle analysis conducted by the Environmental Defense Fund* revealed that reusable cups and glasses can provide the following environmental benefits:

Energy Use: Using glasses in place of disposable polyethylene terephthalate (PET) plastic cups reduced energy use by 98 percent. This was based on one million beverages served in glasses and included the environmental impacts of manufacturing, using and washing glasses.

Water Pollution and Usage: Both ceramic and glass reduced water pollution by 99 percent. Ceramic reusables reduced water usage by 64 percent.

Air Pollution: Ceramic reusables reduced the amount of air particulates by 86 percent and of greenhouse gases by 29 percent. The use of glass cut the amount of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) by 99.7 percent and of nitrogen oxide (NOx) and sulfur oxide (SOx) emissions by 99 percent.

Solid Waste: Ceramic reusables reduced solid waste by 86 percent. Glass reusables cut solid waste by 88 percent, according to weight.