15 Things You Should Never Buy Again!

1. Styrofoam Cups
Styrofoam is forever. It's not biodegradable. *Alternative:* Buy recyclable and compostable paper cups. *Best option:* Invest in some reusable mugs that you can take with you.

2. Farm raised salmon
Several studies have found that PCB's and other environmental toxins are present at higher levels in farm raised salmon than wild salmon. Check out our Safe Seafood Tip Sheet, greenamerica.org/safeseafood

3. Beauty/Body Care with Phthalates and Parabens
Phthalates are a group of industrial chemicals linked to birth defects used in cosmetic products, from nail polish to deodorant. Parabens are preservatives linked to breast cancer. Choose products from companies that have signed on to the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics.

4. Plastic Wrap
In the past, plastic wraps were made with #3 PVC (polyvinyl chloride), which leached toxins when heated or microwaved. Most brands have removed PVCs from household plastic wraps. However, commercial plastic wraps, including those used at grocery stores, commonly contain PVCs.

5. High VOC Paints and Finishes
Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) can cause health problems from dizziness to lung and kidney damage. There is now a wide array of low- or no-VOC paints, stains, and varnishes on the market.

6. Bleached Coffee Filters
Dioxins, chemicals formed during the chlorine bleaching process, contaminate groundwater and air and are linked to cancer. *Alternative:* Look for unbleached paper filters. *Best option:* Use reusable filters.

7. Overpackaged foods and other products
Around 33 percent of trash in the average American household comes from packaging. *Alternative:* Buy products with minimal or reusable packaging. *Best option:* Buy in bulk and use your own containers when shopping.

8. Teak and mahogany
Every year, 27 million acres of rain-forest (an area the size of Ohio) are destroyed. Rainforests are home to over half of the world's wild plant, animal, and insect species. *Alternative:* Look for Forest Stewardship Council certified wood. *Best option:* buy used furniture, flooring, and other products made from used or salvaged wood.

And ...
(More on reverse)

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9. Conventional cleaners
Cleaners can contain hazardous ingredients such as organic solvents and petroleum-based chemicals that can release volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into your home, posing a particular danger for children. *Alternative:* Look for nontoxic, vegetable-based, biodegradable cleaners. *Best option:* Try making your own cleaner using vinegar, water, and castile soap.

10. Pesticides and herbicides used at home
Americans use 80 million pounds of pesticides each year. These chemicals pose threats to animals and people, especially children. *Alternatives:* Buy organic pest controllers such as diatomaceous earth. *Best Option:* Plant native plants and practice integrated pest management. Plant flowers and herbs that act as natural pesticides.

11. Items made with PVC plastic
PVC is found in everyday plastics. Vinyl chloride, the chemical used to make PVC, is a known human carcinogen. Avoid plastics that are labeled as "PVC" or "#3."

12. Plastic forks, spoons, straws
Disposable plastic utensils are not biodegradable and not recyclable in most areas. *Alternative:* Use compostable food service items made from plant materials such as corn starch and cellulose. *Best option:* Carry your own utensils and food containers.

13. Paper towels
Regular paper towels are bleached, and waste forest resources and landfill space. *Alternative:* Look for recycled, non-bleached paper towels. *Best option:* Buy dishtowels or rags to wash and reuse.

14. Poultry products from industrial farms
The majority of chickens are raised in complete captivity and in overcrowded conditions. They are often fed drugs to make them grow to maturity faster, and those drugs may affect your health. *Alternative:* Buy meat and eggs that are certified organic and have a trustworthy animal welfare label. *Best option:* Eat less meat and animal products. You'll be able to avoid these issues, and lower your carbon footprint; animal farming is one of the biggest contributors to climate change.

15. Fast fashion
The majority of retailers base their business on getting trendy looks in stores quickly. Their focus is on speed and low prices. Fast fashion means products do not last long—falling apart due to poor construction or being tossed when trends pass. *Alternative:* Buy from green companies like the ones found on *www.GreenPages.org*, or other ethical shops that use socially just and environmentally friendly practices and make clothes that are designed to last. *Best Option:* Buying clothes secondhand is a great way to minimize your carbon footprint and keep them out of the landfill.

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Green America®
1612 K Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20006