

Dear Editor,

I am writing in regard to Linda Williamson's Perspectives article on life without plastics, printed on February 9. I appreciate the attention Ms. Williamson's article puts on our overdependence on plastics, but even in today's world there are many ways we can minimize plastics in our lives. There are several non-plastic alternatives, it just requires a little more planning!

You can buy a toothbrush with a bamboo handle. When the toothbrush has reached the end of its life, compost it! You'll have to pull out the plastic bristles and throw those in the trash, but majority of your toothbrush is plastic free. Plastic free toothpaste is a DIY project away. Many different recipes exist, just look up zero waste toothpaste online.

The tiny pieces of plastic Ms. Williamson mentions I assume are microbeads. Microbeads are tiny round beads of plastic and are found in many exfoliating scrubs and even toothpaste. When they go down the drain they are too small to be filtered and end up in our rivers, lakes and oceans. In 2017, due to the Microbead-Free Waters Act, it became illegal for companies to manufacture products that contain microbeads. In January 2018, the sale of these products was prohibited. There are exceptions to this law however, so look for products that contain natural biodegradable ingredients like sugar, salt and even nut shells rather than plastic.

Always bring your own cup for coffee! Buy a reusable cup that has a wide enough opening you can easily get your hand in to wash it and simple lid that can be cleaned. Most paper coffee cups have a thin layer of plastic inside them, so even with paper coffee cups you are probably still getting plastic.

You can purchase dishwasher detergent in paper boxes, which can be recycled, or you can make your own! You can buy scrub brushes that are made of bamboo with bristles that are made of fibers from palm trees. These products could be composted when they are no longer of use to you.

Carry your own utensils and metal straw to avoid plastic with your take out. There are even types with a handy carrying case that fits easily in your purse or backpack. You can even bring our own containers when you go out to eat, to take your leftovers home plastic free!

Moral of the story? Focus on purchasing products that can be reused again and again. If it's something that can't be reused forever (e.g. toothbrushes) think about the end of life of product. Can it be recycled or composted?

Want to chat more? Call or email me anytime!

Amanda Griffis
Upper Valley Waste Management Agency
Tel. (707) 259-8330 | amanda.griffis@countyofnapa.org

From: MARY ELLEN HESTER
To: [Griffis, Amanda](#)
Subject: Thank You for Your Letter to the Editor
Date: Tuesday, March 13, 2018 7:21:37 PM

Congratulations to you! I admire your attention to detail to our small town newspaper and picking up on Linda Williamson's column. GREAT letter educating the public.

Mary Ellen Hester

Volunteer at the Napa County Fairgrounds

Soroptimist Int'l of Calistoga