



A GREEN HOME IS A HEALTHY HOME

**The Connecticut Department of
Environmental Protection**

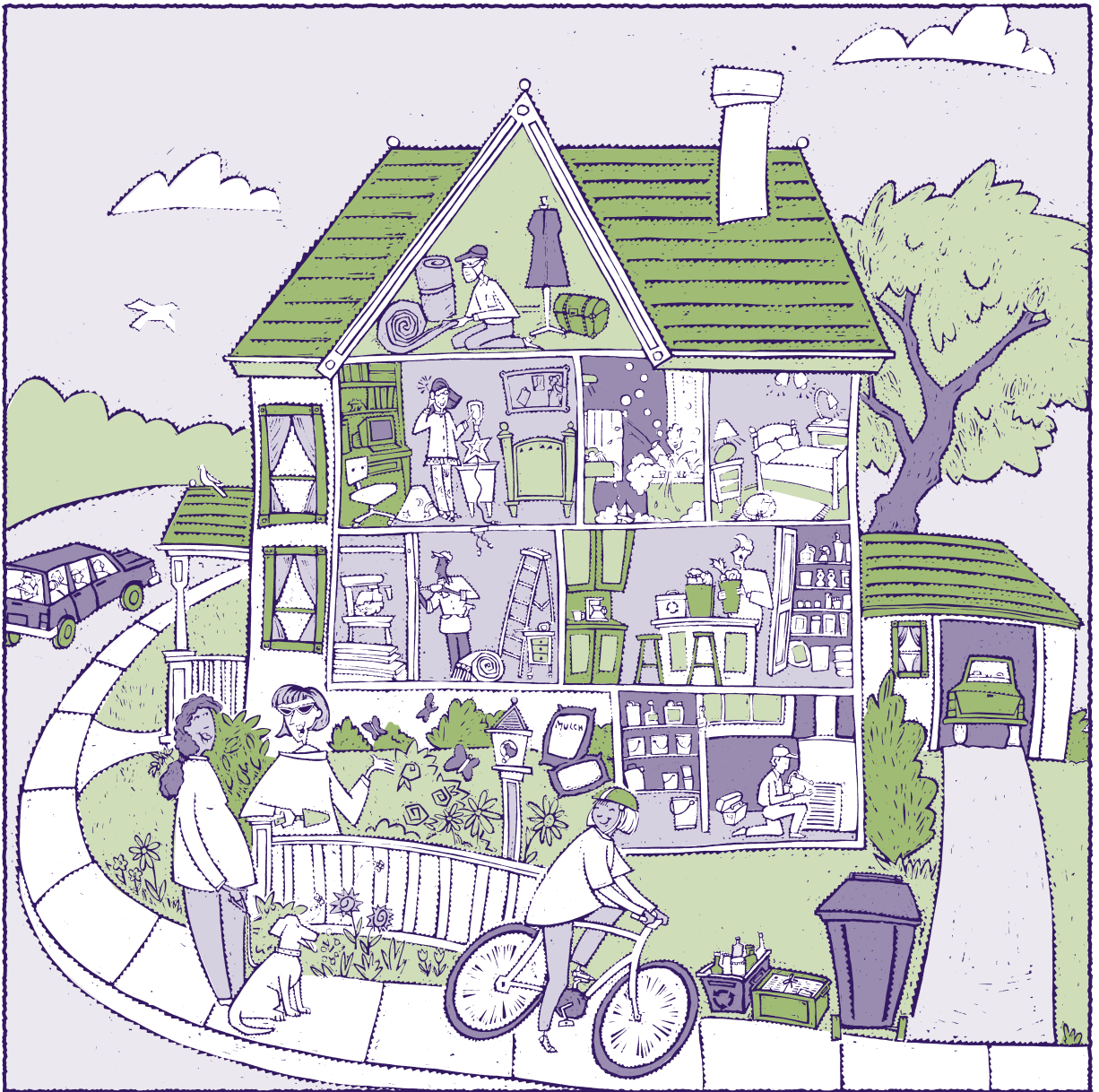
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-  **Conserving Water**
-  **Saving Energy**
-  **Reducing Waste**
-  **Home Improvement**
-  **Lawn and Garden**
-  **Green Shopping**
-  **Automobiles and Travel**

A Green Home Is A Healthy Home

...For You and the Environment

If you are like most people, you've heard that there are actions each of us can take in our daily lives to decrease the pollution in our air, water and other resources. You may not know, however, that the actions you take to help the environment can also be beneficial to our health.

In many cases, there is a very direct link. Look at your own household, for instance. The ways that you use water and energy...the items that you purchase, use and throw away...even what you do with your backyard can have a very significant health impact.

This brochure, "A Green Home Is A Healthy Home", originally produced by the National Wildlife Federation with the cooperation of The National Association of Physicians for the Environment and the Environmental Alliance for Senior Involvement, illustrates how daily household operations can effect the environment and our health. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection has updated this information for Connecticut residents.

Children and the elderly are particularly at risk of suffering the effects of air and water pollution. In this brochure, you will learn how easy it is to live a "greener", healthier lifestyle.

When you create a **Green Home** you do more than make the place you live more livable. You do a service to your community, setting an example for your neighbors to follow. You might want to experiment with one or two of the suggested actions to start with, and then add more until you are doing something in each section of the brochure.

Thanks for your efforts in making Connecticut and our world a better place to live...starting with your own home.

Conserving Water



By wasting less water, we leave more water for other uses, like recreation and fishing, and reduce the risk of pollution. Conserving water reduces health risks, too. Water is more susceptible to bacterial contamination when it moves slowly. Nearly one million Americans get sick each year from contaminated water.

One in five Americans drink water contaminated by toxic chemicals, so keeping toxic chemicals out of our water supply is important. One source of pollution is chemicals running off farmland into rivers and streams. Another source is pollutants we pour down the drain or into the sewer at home.

Wise water use can help improve the health of both people and the environment.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Conserve Water

- Install low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators.
- Fix leaky faucets and toilets.
- If you must water the lawn and garden, use timers and drip hoses early or late in the day.

Keep Water Clean

- Properly dispose of paints, motor oil, and pesticides by recycling or bringing them to a hazardous waste collection site.
- Use low impact gardening techniques that avoid pesticides and chemical fertilizers.
- Buy organic produce, grown with fewer pesticides.

Saving Energy

We waste a lot of energy and money. Producing that energy consumes valuable resources and



creates pollution. For example, generating electricity is a major contributor to acid rain (through sulfur dioxide emissions of coal fired power plants) and global warming (through the burning of fossil fuels such as coal, oil, and natural gas). Generating electricity also harms our health.

Studies have linked energy-generated pollution with worsening asthma in children and other respiratory problems in adults. Pollution from power generation also harms fish and can effect our drinking water by causing toxic materials to leach into the water supply.

Most experts agree that we can easily cut pollution and home energy costs by using energy resources wisely.

WHAT YOU CAN DO



Use Energy Wisely

- Lower your thermostat in the winter and raise it in the summer.
- Have your furnace and air conditioner serviced and cleaned yearly.
- Turn down your hot water heater to 120-140° F.
- Check your refrigerator for leaky gaskets around the doors.
- Caulk, weatherstrip and insulate walls, attics, basements, windows, doors and pipes.



Buy Energy Savers

- Install compact florescent light bulbs where practical.
- Add dimmers and timers to light switches where appropriate.
- Install a programmable thermostat.
- Look for "Energy Star" label when buying new appliances.
- Choose electricity from renewable sources.

Reducing Waste

Americans generate more trash per capita than any other country. On average, each of us discards about 4.4 pounds of solid waste every day, only about a pound of which is recycled, composted or recovered. The remainder goes to landfills or incinerators.

Where to dump our trash is only one problem. Another is the hazardous substances in our trash including many common household items: computers and other electronics, mercury fever thermometers, batteries, motor oil, cleaning products, paints and others. These things can pollute the air, soil and water, harming the earth and our health.



WHAT YOU CAN DO



Reduce Trash

- Avoid wasteful packaging and single use products.
- Buy reusable, repairable, rechargeable, or refillable products.
- Buy products made from recycled material or in recyclable packaging.
- Encourage your town officials to implement a "Pay As You Throw" program to encourage residents to reduce trash, increase recycling, and save \$\$'s.



Eliminate Toxics

- Seek alternatives to caustic household cleaners, pesticides, paint removers and other products containing toxic chemicals.
- Bring unused products to household hazardous waste collections in your community.



Reuse and Recycle

- Try to reuse before you recycle.
- Mulch or compost yard waste.
- Sell or donate used clothing, furnishings, books, equipment, etc.
- Recycle computers, TV's and other electronics at a electronic collection event in your town.

Home Improvement



Keeping your home in tip-top shape is one of the greenest things you can do. By keeping things tuned, painted, repaired and refurbished, you lengthen their useful lives and make them more efficient. But not every home improvement product is good for the environment. Some paints, cleaners, glues and solvents can pollute the inside and outside air and harm your family's health. Check the ingredients of these products before purchasing.

Another concern is wood used for fix-up and building projects. Improper harvesting and processing of some forest tree species can threaten rain forests or "old-growth" forests that are home to endangered plant and animal species.

It's not just what we buy, it's how we use and dispose of it. Keeping hazardous waste out of the trash - where it can leak into the water supply or pollute the air - will ensure that your fix-up project is friendly to your home and everyone else's.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Clean Green

- Buy non-toxic cleaners and other products and use them properly.
- Follow directions when storing leftover products.
- Dispose of toxics at a household hazardous waste day collection.

Fix It Up

- Use low impact products and materials.
- Install energy efficient lights and appliances.
- Use woods from sustainably grown forests (look for independent certification labels).
- Buy carpeting and other products that have recycled content.
- When purchasing products such as paint and carpeting look for indoor air quality information.

Lawn & Garden

Whether you are a gardening enthusiast or someone who simply cuts, weeds, and waters, the actions you take in your yard can have a major impact on the environment and your family's health. For example, habitual use of pesticides and fertilizers can have many drawbacks to the lawn and garden as well as to the environment. Repeated chemical applications can actually diminish the health of the garden by making the soil uninhabitable by beneficial insects and microorganisms.



Pesticides and herbicides can harm people, too. The symptoms of pesticide poisoning can be deceptive, often similar to other illnesses: chest tightness, asthma-like wheezing, coughing, muscle pain, headaches, cramps, and diarrhea.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Reduce Lawn Cover

- Create a low-maintenance backyard habitat.
- Reduce turf grass to less than 75% of the total area.
- Replace it with native trees and shrubs, flowerbeds and ground covers.

Let It Grow Naturally

- Use organic or low-impact gardening and watering techniques.
- To find out what nutrients your lawn needs, test the soil through Cooperative Extension Service or home kit.
- If you use fertilizer, use a slow-release type no more than twice per year.
- Use a mulching mower to shred grass clippings and leave them on the lawn.
- Compost yard waste.
- Conserve water by mulching and by using a soaker hose or drip system.

Green Shopping



The world's growing population is creating a mushrooming demand for more goods- including many cheaply made, disposable products. Every new human life brought onto the Earth creates a need for food, clothing and shelter. Producing all those goods and services requires more and more energy. This use creates more waste and pollution.

The products and services we buy need not be destructive to the environment. By choosing carefully, we can minimize our impact on the environment without significantly compromising our way of life. That's "green shopping."

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Buy Less

- Buy in bulk or in the largest size possible, if you can use it all.
- Rent or borrow rather than buy.
- When appropriate, buy reused, reconditioned, or refurbished, rather than new.
- Think about whether you really need more clutter.

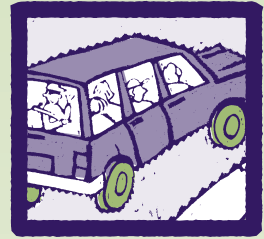
Remember: Recycling is the last resort when reducing or reusing aren't possible.

Shop Smart

- Avoid single-serving and disposable packaging.
- Avoid things you can't or won't recycle.
- Buy reusable or refillable products and those from companies with good environmental records.
- Seek out goods manufactured locally.
- Donate or sell unwanted household items.
- Buy items with recycled content.

Automobiles & Travel

Is it possible to be an environmentally responsible citizen and still enjoy the luxury of automobiles? The answer depends largely on how we drive and take care of our cars. There's no question that motor vehicle exhaust is a major source of health problems, from air pollution and global warming to water pollution and acid rain. Cars also create trash; ten of millions of used tires, batteries and oil filters and other goods are thrown away each year. Building cars creates even more pollution.



There are many steps you can take to lessen the environmental impacts of cars, starting with buying the most fuel-efficient car you can find.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Care For Your Car

- Keep your car tuned, tires inflated, filters cleaned and oil changed regularly.
- Check the air conditioner for leaks.
- Buy the lowest octane gas recommended in your owner's manual.
- Make sure your service station recycles oil, tires and batteries, and antifreeze properly.

Drive Right

- Purchase a car that gets 30-mpg or more.
- Observe speed limits; accelerate smoothly and moderately; avoid tailgating or excessive idling.
- Try not to drive during peak periods.
- Try a low-emission vehicle that uses alternative fuel.

Don't Drive

- Walk, bike, skate, jog or take public transportation.
- Telecommute one or two days per week.
- Set up or join a car or vanpool where you work.