*What Can I Do to Help the Environment?*

*AT HOME*

1. Save Energy –
   * Heat and Cool Smartly (Set your thermostat a few degrees lower in the winter and a few degrees higher in the summer.)
   * Wash clothes in cold water whenever possible (as much as 85 percent of the energy used to machine-wash clothes goes to heating the water),
   * Dry clothes on a drying rack or clothesline (you also save water that’s used to produce electricity)
   * Unplug appliances when not in use or use a smart power strip that senses when appliances are off and cuts phantom energy use,
   * Purchase products with the energy star label
   * Change your light bulbs to CFL or LED bulbs (CFLs are an energy-efficient lighting choice that use 1/5 to 1/3 the amount of energy as incandescent bulbs. LEDs use less energy that CFLs but it’s their long lifespan (up to 25 years) that sets them apart.) For more information go to: <http://NYSERDA.ny.gov/BulbUp>
   * Insulate your home and seal air leaks
2. Use Water Efficiently –
   * Take shorter showers (This will lower your water and heating bill)
   * Install a low flow shower head
   * Place a faucet aerator on each faucet (These conserve heat and water while keeping water pressure high)
   * Don’t run the water while shaving or brushing your teeth
   * Repair leaks (in faucets/toilets) right away
   * Run full loads in the dishwasher and washing machine
   * Plant drought-tolerant native plants in your garden
3. Eat Smarter –
   * If you eat meat, add one meatless meal a week. (Meat is expensive when you consider the related environmental and health costs. Meat production is a major source of greenhouse gases.)
   * Buy locally raised, humane and organic meat, eggs and dairy when you can. (This keeps money in the local economy and you know where your food comes from.)
   * Eat low on the food chain. This is especially true for seafood. For more information go to: <http://seafood.edf.org/guide/best>
   * Skip the bottled water! Use a water filter to purify tap water and bring a reusable water bottle, preferably aluminum rather than plastic
   * Don’t wash fresh vegetables until you’re ready to use them. Washing hastens spoilage. Wrap in paper towels and store in plastic bags in refrigerator.
4. Buy Smarter –
   * Invest in high quality, long-lasting products. (You’ll pay more but won’t have to replace as often. Less waste!)
   * Wear clothes that don’t need to be dry cleaned (Saves money and cuts down on chemical use)
   * Buy in bulk when practical (This can save money and reduce packaging)
   * Think before you buy (Check out web sites such as craigslist or FreeSharing or garage sales, thrift or consignment shops to find gently used items
   * Borrow instead of buying (Libraries are a great source for reading, viewing or listening materials. Neighbors can share power tools)
   * Use environmentally friendly laundry detergent, dishwasher detergent
   * Use bleach and disinfectants sparingly – Instead of chlorine bleach consider oxygen bleach for stain removal (safe for the water supply and it works!)
5. Keep Electronics Out of the Trash –
   * Use your cell phones, computers and other electronics as long as possible
   * Donate or recycle them responsibly when the time comes. E-waste contains mercury and other toxics and is a growing environmental problem
   * For information about proper disposal of electronics visit: http://environment.westchestergov.com/electronics-tvs
6. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle!
   * Keep these words in mind before purchasing products or discarding products. For additional information about recycling in Westchester County visit: <http://environment.westchestergov.com/resident-recycling>
   * The Household Material Recovery Facility (H-MRF) on the Grassland Campus in Valhalla accepts household hazardous waste and other items worthy of special handling from Westchester County residents on an appointment-only basis. Online reservations can be made at <http://environment.westchestergov.com> HMRF is listed under “Facilities"
   * Use waxed paper snack and sandwich bags instead of zip locked bags when possible. Products that are unbleached, compostable, made from FSC Certified forests, and without petroleum are available.
   * Re-use glass food jars. It’s good for the planet.
   * Compost grass clippings and leaves. Mulch can be costly, but is inexpensive when you make your own. For more information about mulching visit: <http://www.leleny.org/> With respect to composting leaves, it is best to mulch the leaves in place on your lawn. If you use a landscaper who won't do that and blows them to the curb instead, there are good reasons to ask if he/she would take them to local composting facilities or nurseries.  Leaves piled at the curb can clog sewers, become hazards if rained on or covered with snow and, if enough people have their leaves carted, the municipality might save some money.

*ON THE GO*

1. Walk, Bike or Use Mass Transit when possible –
   * Saves on gas and parking costs while improving your health
2. When Driving (to improve mileage and reduce your environmental impact)
   * Go easy on the breaks and gas
   * Don’t idle the engine while waiting in your car
   * Reduce the weight in your car trunk
   * Maintain proper tire pressure and maintain your car
   * Stay up to date on tune-ups and oil and filter changes
   * Reduce unnecessary drag. At highway speeds, more than 50% of engine power goes to overcoming aerodynamic drag, so don’t carry things on top of car or excess weight in trunk if you don’t have to.
   * Don’t use premium fuel if you don’t have to
   * Buy tires with lower rolling resistance
   * Minimize driving with a cold engine
   * Plan trips to combine errands and save round-trips
   * Cruise control can save gas
3. When Purchasing a New Car – purchase a fuel efficient, low-greenhouse gas vehicle