

Plastic – it's all around us; 10 ways to reduce your use of plastic items

From surfrider.org/programs/entry/rise-above-plastics

It's in our homes, our offices, our vehicles, our yards, our playgrounds. We use it to package food, bottle products, bag produce, make dinnerware and utensils, make toys.

Plastics have undoubtedly helped us to manufacture, package and ship goods more easily, for less money and in some cases more safely than ever before.

But plastics pose a significant threat to our planet as well.

Part of the problem is plastic itself. The very qualities that make it an adaptable and durable product to use also make plastic an environmental nightmare. You see, plastics do not biodegrade. Instead they photodegrade – breaking down under exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays into smaller and smaller pieces.

Bottom line: With the exception of the small amount that has been incinerated, virtually every piece of plastic that was ever made still exists in some shape or form.

10 ways to rise above plastics

Here are 10 easy things you can do to reduce your "plastic footprint" and help keep plastics out of the marine environment:

1. Choose to reuse when it comes to shopping bags and bottled water. Cloth bags and metal or glass reusable bottles are available locally at great prices.
2. Refuse single-serving packaging, excess packaging, straws and other

"disposable" plastics. Carry reusable utensils in your purse, backpack or car to use at barbecues, potlucks or take-out restaurants.

3. Reduce everyday plastics such as sandwich bags and juice cartons by replacing them with a reusable lunch bag/box that includes a thermos.
4. Bring your to-go mug with you to the coffee shop, smoothie shop or restaurants that let you use them. A great way to reduce lids, plastic cups and/or plastic-lined cups.
5. Go digital! No need for plastic CDs, DVDs and jewel cases when you can buy your music and videos online.
6. Seek out alternatives to the plastic items that you rely on.
7. Recycle. If you must use plastic, try to choose #1 (PETE) or #2 (HDPE), which are the most commonly recycled plastics. Avoid plastic bags and polystyrene foam as both typically have very low recycling rates.
8. Volunteer at a beach cleanup.
9. Support plastic bag bans, polystyrene foam bans and bottle recycling bills.
10. Spread the word. Talk to your family and friends about why it is important to Rise Above Plastics!

STEP bags for shopping

Just bag it! Help protect the environment when you shop. Keep reusable bags on your car seat or near your door so they are easy to grab when you go. You can even combine shopping bags – tell the cashier you don't need a bag, then put all

your purchases together in one bag. Just be sure to hang onto your receipts!

If you would like a free bag with the Siletz Tribal Energy Program logo on it, contact us with your name, roll number and address. We will mail one to you for free!

If you have any questions, please contact STEP staff at (toll-free) 800-922-1399 or 541-444-2532, ext. 1271, 1276 or 1300; or by e-mail at step@ctsi.nsn.us. Search for us on Facebook and "like" us for more news and tips!

Applying for Tribal education funds?

Some requirements and deadlines to keep in mind

1. The once-a-year annual deadline for funding is June 30 of each year (for funding for the upcoming fall semester or academic year).
2. Students must apply for FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) at fafsa.ed.gov between Jan. 1-31 each year. Your application for Tribal funding will not be accepted if you do not meet this deadline.

Important information, deadlines for the college-bound Tribal senior

May

- This is the deadline for final decisions for universities.
- Send letter of intent to registrar.
- Line up a summer job.
- Attend your Senior Awards Night.
- Review any award letters and be sure you understand the terms and conditions that accompany each type of aid.
- If necessary, arrange for housing and a meal plan (at school).

- Send thank you notes to any person/committee from which you received a scholarship.

June

- Tribal higher education and adult vocational training applications are due June 30!
- Attend graduation – congratulations!
- Make arrangements for your final grades to be sent to colleges and universities.
- Good luck!

Tooth Talk: Research under way to engineer new teeth with stem cells

By Mary Ellen Volansky, RDH, MS

This is a follow-up to an article last year on stem cell research and its potential impact for oral health.

At the time, I covered the types of stem cells, many of which are beyond the embryonic stem cells that have caused a controversy. These stem cells, embryonic stem cells, have the advantage that they can grow into any type of cells. As you will see, dental stem cells, those from inside a living tooth, can grow into a few things too.

Growing new teeth

What does engineering have to do with stem cells? It was announced in July 2011 that researchers at Tokyo University of Science had grown new teeth in their laboratory. Now the engineering comes in – they used tooth-shaped molds. The growing cells were placed into the molds and allowed to grow to fill them.

The teeth-shaped masses of cells then were placed into the jaws of 1-month-old mice. On average it took 40 days for these teeth to fuse with the jawbones of these mice. If you want to see pictures of stem cell-grown teeth, go to medicalexpress.com.

Do you remember the article I wrote last year on stem cell research? It explained the different types of stem cells and explored some of the directions in which researchers were moving. There was talk of using molds to allow stem cells

to grow in the shape needed. This research in Japan puts that concept to work.

Another set of researchers, this time in Naples, Italy (2009), used dental pulp (living tissue inside each tooth, what is removed when one has a root canal) stem cells and a collagen sponge scaffold (more engineering) to repair a defect in the mandible after a third molar was removed.

In this case, the defect was a hole caused by the absence of the third molar that had been extracted. This repair grew bone and produced periodontal tissues as well. This work supports the hope that treatment for bone loss from periodontal or gum disease is on the near horizon.

Bad breath helps with research

In the United Kingdom, the Press Association published an article on dental stem cells. In this Feb. 26, 2012, article, researchers took dental stem cells and exposed them to a gas, hydrogen sulphide (H₂S). This H₂S gas smells like rotten eggs and is the major cause of bad breath for us all.

What was interesting about this, besides bad breath, is that these cells grew into liver cells. This finding has importance for those undergoing liver transplants.

Stem cells treated with H₂S and growing into liver cells have a strong possibility of staying liver cells – not becoming tumors or cancers. I can't think of a better use of bad breath.

Whether teeth are grown in our jaw from birth or whether we place tooth-growing cells in our jaw at middle age, all teeth need to be brushed and flossed to prevent their destruction. Isn't it easier to brush and floss than to come to the clinic and have injections and stitches and healing time to grow a new tooth (don't forget the steps involved in having the original painful tooth extracted)?

At the Siletz Dental Clinic we like to keep teeth healthy. And as the research provided above shows, researchers are not anywhere near ready for placement into human mouths. So please come in

regularly so we can help you maintain the health of the great teeth you already have.

Chickletize?

On a brighter note, do you know what chickletize, a verb, means? If you think you know the definition, let me know. A battery-operated Sonicare toothbrush could go to the holder of the correct answer. If more than one person has the correct definition, I'll draw for the winner.

The correct definition and the toothbrush winner will be included in the June issue of *Siletz News*. E-mail your answer to maryellenv@ctsi.nsn.us by May 15.

Courtesy photo by
Mary Ellen Volansky

Nathan Luckini,
Dorrea Brown,
Kayden McKibben
and Kodey Aradoz
hold up their prizes
from this year's
Sealant Clinic that
helped 182 Siletz
Valley School students
receive screenings,
sealants and fluoride
varnishes during three
days in February.
Not pictured: Jaime
Helms.

