

Reducing Single-use Plastics in Healthcare

What's the problem?

Single use plastic is harmful to our health and our environment — yet it's everywhere in our healthcare system.^{1,2}



This harm starts from the time plastic is produced. 98% of single use plastics are made from fossil fuels, which emit green-house gases and drive climate change.³

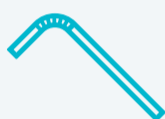


These items are used once and thrown out, creating pollution and waste. About one-third of a hospital's general waste is plastic.⁴ Less than 10% of plastic is recycled.⁵



Solutions are everywhere

Healthcare emits 7% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.⁶ Reducing single use plastic can reduce our emissions.



In Brisbane, the Wesley Hospital has stopped using 480,000 **plastic straws** each year by changing practices and switching products.



Auckland District Health Board in New Zealand delisted **hard plastic drug trays** from their purchasing catalogue, replacing them with compostable drug trays.



Great Ormond Street Hospital in the UK reduced their **non-sterile glove** use by 3.7 million in one year through education and communication.



Barwon Health reduced annual **pill cups** from 1.5 million a year to 9500 a year by reviewing usage.⁷ South West Healthcare replaced 95% of **plastic medicine cups** with paper medicine cups.⁸

Steps for taking action at your health institution...

1. Assemble a team of champions
2. Complete an audit and identify items to target
3. Identify stakeholders e.g. infection control, procurement, OHS, support services
4. Develop a plan and make your case
5. Run a trial
6. Keep records
7. Evaluate your solution and change as needed
8. Celebrate and share your achievements and challenges

Together, we can reduce single use plastic in healthcare.

Use the QR code or head to caha.org.au/reducing_sup_in_health to join the campaign and access more information.



1 <https://www.ciel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Plastic-and-Health-The-Hidden-Costs-of-a-Plastic-Planet-February-2019.pdf>
 2 <https://www.endocrine.org/topics/edc/plastics-edcs-and-health>
 3 <https://sourceofplasticwaste.org/>
 4 https://www.nswcircular.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/NSW-Circular_Plastics-in-Healthcare-Report_Case-for-Circularity.pdf
 5 <https://www.science.org/doi/pdf/10.1126/sciadv.1700782>

6 <https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-51961730180-8/fulltext>
 7 Clinical presentation at the ANMF (Vic Branch) 2021 Health and Environmental Sustainability Conference.
 8 SWHC Environmental Sustainability report 2018-19

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