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Ten Easy Tips for Restaurants to Become More Sustainable

1. Only give **water** upon request. If one in four people avoided the free glass of water at a restaurant, the entire industry would conserve more than 26 million gallons of water a year. Not only saving the water in the glass but the hot water, detergent, and electricity to wash the glass is also saved.
2. Avoid giving out **straws** unless requested. Most people do not use straws at home yet they expect them in restaurants. Not only are the straws generally plastic but they are paper-covered. It takes 700 years for a plastic straw to decompose in a landfill. The money saved by not putting a straw into each beverage could pay for biodegradable paper straws.
3. **Menus** printed on 100% recycled paper.
4. Stop the use of **Styrofoam**. Styrofoam is not recyclable. It takes hundreds of years to start to decompose. It initially breaks down into smaller pieces and can be eaten by birds and other animals. Switch to recycled paper products. Use paper cups when necessary for cold beverages and put used ones in with your recycling. Use hot cups made from paper as well. Do not use lids unless the consumer requests. Stock no plastic that is not recyclable. In Haddon Township we recycle 1 thru 7 (minus 3 and 6), so 1, 2, 4, 5, and 7 should be the only plastics used. This is for all packaging including lids and take-out containers.
5. Replace incandescent **light bulbs**. If just 10% of restaurants replaced one incandescent light bulb with a CFL, according to the EPA, the energy savings would be \$2.8 million
6. **Napkins** made from 100% recycled paper. Subway figures its 4 billion recycled napkins save 147,000 trees annually.
7. Purchase sustainable, **local foods**. This means food products which support the long-term maintenance of ecosystems and agriculture for future generations. This includes organic and locally grown foods, both of which reduce the use of toxic synthetic pesticides and fertilizers and pollution associated with long distance transportation.
8. Install **flow restrictors on faucets**. A flow restrictor limits the amount of water used in hand washing sinks and in restrooms and back-counters.
9. Consider more "**small plates**". More food waste occurs in restaurants than in homes. Give consumers the option of smaller portions with less waste. Invest in door-to-door compost pick up service for food waste.
10. Post a **flyer on each table educating the consumer** as to why these changes are happening and of your commitment to become more environmentally-friendly.

Most of all, educate your employees to become more aware of their actions including mandatory recycling of all paper products, recyclable plastics, cans and bottles as well as following the actions above.