

Township of Livingston

Bag Challenge

10 Questions About Carry-Out Bags

Test your knowledge of the truth about carry-out bags with this short quiz.

- How many disposable bags does the average American use per year?
 - 200
 - 300
 - 400
 - 500
- About how many plastic bags are used in New Jersey each year?
 - 1.7 billion
 - 2.3 billion
 - 3.1 billion
 - 4.4 billion
- What percentage of plastic bags are recycled in the USA?
 - 4.3%
 - 5.7%
 - 6.1%
 - 7%
- How many paper grocery bags are used annually in the United States?
 - 1 billion
 - 2 billion
 - 5 billion
 - 10 billion
- Which of the following is true for producing paper bags vs. producing plastic bags?
 - Paper emits 70% more air pollution
 - Paper results in 50% more water pollution
 - Paper consumes 4 times the energy
 - Paper emits 80% more greenhouse gases
 - All of the above
- True or False: It takes more energy to recycle a paper bag than a plastic bag.
 - True
 - False
- True or False: Most paper bags are made from recycled paper pulp.
 - True
 - False
- Reusable bags can be made from:
 - Plastic
 - Cotton
 - Canvas
 - All of the above
- How can you kill virtually all bacteria in reusable bags?
 - It's impossible
 - Disinfectant
 - Simply washing
 - Burning
- What is the average useful life of a disposable carry-out bag is?
 - 10 minutes
 - 1 week
 - 1 month
 - 1 year



Working together for a Green Livingston

The Bag Facts

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1. The Average American uses about 500 plastic and/or paper bags per year. Based on EPA estimates, and Garbology by Edward Humes. Answer (d)
2. According to the 2012 census there are 8.8 million people in NJ. *8.8 million x 500 bags = 4.4 billion bags. Answer (d)
3. The EPA Municipal Solid Waste Report 2010, page 9, table 7 shows that about 4.3% of all **High-density polyethylene (HDPE)** plastic bags are recycled. Answer (a)
4. Each year the United States uses 10 billion paper grocery bags, requiring approximately 14 million trees. Answer (d)
5. According to an article, *Which is more environmentally friendly: paper or plastic?* by Jane McGrath, Paper production emits air pollution, specifically 70 percent more pollution than the production of plastic bags. According to certain studies, manufacturing paper emits 80 percent more greenhouse gases. And, consider that making paper uses trees that, instead, could be absorbing carbon dioxide. The paper bag making process also results in 50 times more water pollutants than making plastic bags. Even though petroleum goes into making plastic, it turns out that making a paper bag consumes four times as much energy as making a plastic bag, meaning making paper consumes a good deal of fuel. Answer (e)
6. According to the Washington Post it takes 91% less energy to recycle a pound of plastic than it does to recycle a pound of paper. Answer (a)
7. Paper bags are mostly made from virgin tree pulp because recycled pulp is not as strong, so their production inevitably begins with chopping down trees. Paper bag production is damaging to the environment in two ways: chopping down trees reduces the absorption of greenhouse gases, and the manufacture of the bags requires use of toxic chemicals that contribute to air and water pollution. Additionally, the transportation of paper bags, which are relatively bulky and heavy, requires the consumption of petroleum, a non-renewable fossil fuel that causes further air pollution. Read more :
http://www.ehow.com/about_5079972_paper-bags.html Answer (b)
8. Reusable bags can be made from plastic, canvas, or cotton but the most environmentally beneficial bags are made from canvas or cotton. The biggest problem with plastic bags is that they do not readily break down in the environment, with estimates for the time it takes them to decompose ranging from 20 to 1000 years. Answer (d)
9. According to a 2010 study, hand or machine washing can get rid of over 99.99% of germs in reusable bags. Answer (c)
10. The useful life of a disposable carry-out bag is very short – an average of around 10 minutes and in most cases there are readily available alternatives. Answer (a)