



Make your office more environmentally friendly! There are four main areas for improvement: energy efficiency, water conservation, higher air quality, and waste reduction

Water Conservation

- *Turn the water off when it is not in use.
- *Put a sign at each sink in the office and in bathrooms "Please turn off the water when not in use"
- *Have sensors for sinks or kick plates to eliminate running water when not needed.
- *Install aerators that restrict flow from your tap to 1.5 gpm. Older faucets use 3-5 gpm
- *Use medical-grade hand sanitizer instead of hand-washing; opting for a hand sanitizer saves the practice approximately 360 paper towels and 90 gallons of water each day
- *Don't have sinks in the treatment rooms or turn the water off at existing sinks within treatment rooms. Instead, they have a sink installed in one location. This will force everyone to use the one sink that is designated for employees.
- *Install low-flow toilets—earns EPA's WaterSense label using at most 1.28 gallons per flush. The traditional toilet uses 7 gallons per flush.
- *Convert existing toilets to dual flush mechanism. 1.6 gallons per flush for solid waste and .8 gallons per flush for liquid
- *Place bricks or other heavy objects in the tank or purchase a toilet water dam to attach inside the bowl to reduce water usage per flush
- *Install a waterless vacuum system; regular systems consume approximately one gallon per minute
- *Hire an environmentally friendly landscape company that uses natural growth product and procedures as an alternative to harmful pesticides to care for your office's lawn
- *Use non-chlorinated, neutral pH products to clean suction lines
- *Consider putting in a water filtration system

Energy Efficiency

*Go Digital! Ask your dental office if they offer digital x-rays. Digital x-rays offer have 75-90% less radiation than the traditional ones while eliminating the need for toxic x-ray fixer solutions and lead foils. Switching to digital radiography uses less energy than previous methods.

*Put your computer in sleep mode (consumes 70% less electricity) and turn it off when the office is closed. Screen savers don't save energy—they only protect wandering eyes

*UNPLUG the TV office after hours. Models may consume more electricity in 20 hours being off than 4 hours of being on!

*Consider plugging all electronics—TV, VCR, DVD into a power strip so they can be turned off and on easily

*Install CFL's; they produce 70% less heat and last 8 to 12 times longer than incandescents.

*Turn off lights when leaving the room; have switches for each room to reduce use.

*Install motion sensors in rooms to keep unnecessary lights off

*Buy Energy-star appliances where applicable.

*Purchase renewable power from your energy company (wind, solar, geothermal, biomass)

*Turn off and unplug all electrical appliances at the end of the day, including computers, printers, and copiers

*Encourage employees and patients to ride their bikes, car pool, or take mass transit. Set up a bike rack outside your office and have a local bus route map available

*Install Programmable thermostats

*Replace style T-12 fluorescent fixtures with efficient T-8 fixtures

*Insulate hot water pipes, boilers, and water heaters

Waste Reduction

- *Recycle. Paper cups, cans and plastic bottles can be recycled. Office paper too!
- *Use a community's existing recycling program to separately recycle the paper and plastic halves of autoclave bags.
- *Treat **all** lightbulbs as hazardous waste; recycle or dispose at hazardous waste site
- *Assess the need to print, and if so print double sided
- *Set goals to reduce paper use
- *Print in draft mode to save ink; this saves about 50% of the ink used in normal mode (ecoPrint2 cartridges reduce ink usage up to 75%)
- *Buy recycled or organic versions of office supplies; find 100% recycled stationary
- *Use steam sterilization versus chemical
- * Use cloth sterilization and reuse cloth. This along with steam sterilization, saves an estimated total of 23,400 pieces of paper and 23,400 pieces of plastic in five years. Studies show that using cloth sterilization methods diverts nearly 5000 pieces of paper and 5000 pieces of plastic from the average dental practice in just one year.
- *Using fabric patient "bibs" instead of 2-ply paper, 1-ply plastic bibs diverts 10,200 pieces of paper and 5,100 pieces of plastic from landfill annually
- *Stop using chair barriers, and simply wipe down with hospital-grade nontoxic disinfectants
- *Use washable PPE's and lab coats
- *Go Digital! Ask your dental office if they offer digital x-rays. Digital x-rays offer have 75-90% less radiation than the traditional ones while eliminating the need for toxic x-ray fixer solutions and lead foils.
- *Go Paperless-- A paperless dental office can save over 50,000 sheets of paper a year!
- *Switch to stainless-steel saliva ejectors
- * Use eco-friendly office cleaning products such as tea tree oil and thyme.
- * Purchase prophylaxis paste in bulk
- * Switch to stainless steel impression tray

- *Use recycled toner cartridges
- *Have employees bring a mug from home that can be washed and reused instead of wasting paper and Styrofoam cups for hot beverages.
- *Recycle printer cartridges and batteries
- *Set up recycling bins (paper, plastic, aluminum, etc.) in your office
- *Consider switching to reusable cups or mugs and washable cloth lab coats and chair barriers.**
- *Install an amalgam separator, and properly recycle amalgam waste**
- *Recover silver from X-ray systems**
- *If using traditional x-rays, recycle fixer and developer solutions and recycle lead foil from x-rays.
- *Use reusable operating room cotton towels instead of disposable plastic or paper patient bibs
- *Use reusable stainless steel high- and low-volume, surgical/endodontic suction tips as an alternative to disposable plastic
- *Use reusable glass irrigation syringe as a substitute for disposable plastic
- *Use biodegradable disposable cups instead of regular paper cups
- *Use chlorine-free, high post-consumer recycled paper products instead of traditional paper products.
- *Use stainless steel prophylaxis cups instead of disposable prophylaxis-containing cups. This means purchasing prophylaxis paste in tubes or tubs. This also allows you to use only the amount of paste that is needed versus a predetermined amount, which is often more than you need, and thus wasteful and costly.
- *Use disposable, plastic or paper barriers only as truly needed. An effective exercise would be for each office to do a one-day consumption analysis exclusively for barriers and then calculate how many barriers are used per week, month and year, and throughout one's dental career.
- *Use liquid crystal display (LCD) instead of cathode ray tube (CRT) computer monitors.
- *Use linoleum, a more environmentally friendly choice for flooring.
- *Implement an eco-friendly sterilization program, which simultaneously eliminates the need for disposable autoclave wraps and disposable patient bibs.

*Recycle disposable autoclave paper and plastic. Separate the two and put them in the recycle bin. The average number of autoclave bags used per day is 23.4. Calculated on a 200-day work year, that amounts to 4,680 pieces of autoclave paper and plastic being diverted from the landfill each year or more than 140,000 pieces over the course of a 30-year career

*Use Lead-free aprons

Air Quality

*Have green plants in the office to increase the indoor air quality

*Bike to work, use public transportation, or car pool

*Remodel using an ultra-low volatile organic compound (VOC) paint.

* Use eco-friendly office cleaning products

* Switch to a non-toxic disinfectant

* Use biodegradable ultrasonic solution

*Hire an environmentally friendly landscape company that uses natural growth product and procedures as an alternative to harmful pesticides to care for your office's lawn.

*Encourage employees and patients to ride their bikes or take mass transit. Set up a bike rack outside your office and have a local bus route map available