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THE NORTH COUNTRY **HEALTH** EFFECT

A health & safety guide brought to you by the Clinton County Health Department.



Food Waste Reduction

Most people don't realize how much food they throw away every day. It could be leftovers no one eats, fruits and vegetables that go bad, or pieces of food that could have been used.

In the U.S., each person wastes about one pound of food every day. About 40% of all the food made in the country is thrown away. The surprising part? Almost half of that waste happens at home. In 2021, around 20 million pounds of food scraps were sent to the Clinton County landfill. When food ends up in landfills, it breaks down and releases gases like methane and carbon dioxide, which are bad for the environment and make climate change worse. At the Clinton County landfill, some of these gases are collected and used to make electricity to power the landfill and homes in our community.

Wasting food also wastes water, land, and energy — all things that help grow and make our food. This waste can even lead to higher grocery prices. On top of that, while food is being wasted, many people don't have enough to eat. The good news is that if we waste less food, we can save money, help the planet, and support people in need.

What is food waste?

Food waste is any food that gets tossed out instead of being eaten.



Wasting food is expensive

- People in the United States throw away over \$473 billion worth of food every year.
- A typical family of four wastes about \$3,000 each year on food they don't eat.

Food waste impacts food security

- In Clinton County, 1 out of every 3 people has worried about not having enough food or has run out of food before they could buy more.
- Every year, 92 billion pounds of food are wasted in the U.S. That's about 145 billion meals thrown away.

Food waste contributes to climate change

- Wasting food causes 8% of the world's carbon pollution and fills up our landfills the most.
- Food waste creates five times more harmful greenhouse gases than air travel.



What can you do?

Prevent Wasted Food

- Produce, buy, and serve only what is needed.
 - First, check what food you already have at home. Try to plan meals using food that might go bad soon.
 - Make a shopping list of any other food you need.
 - Stick to your list when you shop. Don't shop while you're hungry – it can lead to buying extra snacks!
 - Store your food the right way so it stays fresh longer.
 - Learn what food product dating means.
Every year, about 3 billion pounds of food – worth over \$7 billion – are thrown away because people are confused by the dates on the labels.

Donate and Repurpose Excess Food

- Use food that's getting old – like wilted spinach – in new ways. You can add it to soups, casseroles, stir-fries, sauces, or smoothies instead of throwing it away.
- Help others by giving extra food to one of the 14 local food pantries. Scan the QR code or visit health.clintoncountyny.gov/healthygiving to learn more.

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Feed Animals or Leave Unharvested

- Give leftover food like bread, milk, fruits, or vegetables to animals. Ask local farmers or friends with chickens if they want your food scraps to feed their animals.
- Sometimes, farmers leave crops in the field if they can't sell them – like fruits or vegetables that look a little weird. These crops can be eaten by animals or plowed back into the soil to help it stay healthy.



Apply to the land

Like leaving crops in the field, raw food waste can also be used to help grow more food. Some farmers use it to make their soil better. You can ask local farmers if they want to collect your food scraps for their fields.

Green cone solar digesters break down food scraps and turn them into healthy soil. You can get one for \$50 from Casella Waste Systems at the Schuyler Falls Convenience Station. To learn more about green cone solar digesters, visit health.clintoncountyny.gov/eswl.

To learn more about food waste reduction efforts in Clinton County, get more tips for reducing food waste at home, or learn how to repurpose your food waste, scan the QR code or visit health.clintoncountyny.gov/eswl.

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ME! >>



Compost

- Participate in a municipal food scrap drop-off program. For a list of town/city/village food scrap drop-off programs, visit <https://health.clintoncountyny.gov/eswl> or call Health Planning and Promotion at 518-565-4993 to learn more about a program near you.
- Drop your food scraps off at a community food scrap drop-off location. For a list of all drop-off locations, visit <https://health.clintoncountyny.gov/eswl>.
- Turn your food scraps into compost to strengthen your garden. To learn more about composting in your backyard, visit <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home>.



For more health & safety tips, visit health.clintoncountyny.gov/nchealtheffect/ or scan the QR code.



Information in this guide was adapted from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA www.epa.gov), the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC www.dec.ny.gov), Feeding America (www.feedingamerica.org), and Stop Food Waste (www.stopfoodwaste.org).

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