

REDUCING FOOD WASTE IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Montgomery County has a goal to reduce waste and recycle more, aiming for zero waste. The County's highest priority is to prevent or reduce the amount of waste generated in the first place.

Based on the County's most recent waste composition study (2023), approximately 89,000 tons of food scraps are disposed in the trash annually.

Where does wasted food come from?

- Food scraps generated at home during meal preparation
- Food scraps generated in the kitchens of restaurants, delis, cafeterias, hotels, hospitals and other food service businesses or facilities
- Food that is thought to be "expired" or past its "best by," "sell by" or "best if used by" dates
- Foods that have blemishes or marks that do not appeal to customers
- Excess or unwanted food that is still consumable but is not eaten
- Unused foods from the agricultural sector, such as unharvested crops

Excess portions of prepared foods, baked goods, fresh produce, canned or boxed foods, etc. can be diverted from disposal and donated to food rescue organizations.

Channeling this food to give to others with unmet needs ensures the highest and best use of this food, while also helping to address food insecurity.

WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT WASTED FOOD?

According to *Feeding America*, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief network, 8.6% of Montgomery County's population in 2019 was classified as "food insecure," meaning they don't have consistent access to quality, nutritious food.

Montgomery County's 2017 Food Security Plan reveals that nearly 14% of children in the County (approximately 33,000) fall within that designation.

Through efforts to increase food donations, the County can reduce the amount of edible food that's thrown away and decrease food insecurity. At the same time, minimizing the amount of wasted food that's disposed as trash will help the County reach its zero waste goals and fight climate change.



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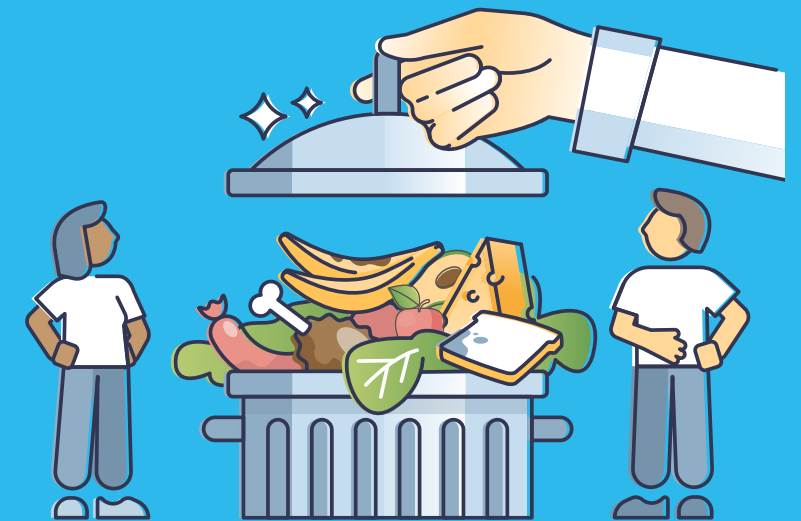
Montgomery County, Maryland
Department of Environmental Protection
Recycling and Resource Management Division
Waste Reduction and Recycling Section

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MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/ReduceFoodWaste
Phone: 311 or 240-777-0311 TTY: MD Relay 711

FOOD IS TOO GOOD TO WASTE

REDUCING FOOD WASTE BEGINS WITH YOU!



MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/ReduceFoodWaste
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Here are some easy ways to reduce the amount of wasted food that ends up in the trash:



- ✓ Plan in advance before you shop.
- ✓ Buy only what you will prepare or store.
- ✓ Check expiration dates.



- ✓ Serve smaller-sized portions.
- ✓ Consume perishable foods first.



- ✓ Organize your ingredients ahead of time.
- ✓ Cook only what and the quantity you need.
- ✓ Freeze extras for future meals.



- ✓ Safely store food that remains.
- ✓ Store leftovers in reusable containers.
- ✓ Put a label on the container with the contents and the date.

Other tips to reduce wasted food:



Before you go shopping, check your freezer and refrigerator and pantry to see what you already have for new meals.



Use leftovers or cuttings in recipes. Use vegetable cuttings to make soup stock. Use stale bread to make your own croutons. Be creative in the kitchen.



Freeze products you don't plan to use immediately. Properly package food to store in the freezer and add a label with the contents and the date.



Donate extra edible food to local food rescue organizations, food pantries and shelters.

**FOOD.
DON'T WASTE IT!**