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Home Environmental Impact Game

We've learned a lot about the human impact on our watershed this week. Now, you'll get to apply that knowledge at home! Below is a checklist to see how you use water in your household, and ways you can be more environmentally friendly.

Right now, we are using a lot of water to wash our hands— which is good!

We're also probably using more disposable bags, paper products, and cleaning supplies than usual. All of this is good, we need to do our part right to keep things clean during the COVID-19 outbreak. However, you can still make goals to have less environmental impact in the future, and we can start doing some things right now!

Your mission is to see how your home can be have less impact on the environment. This will be a team effort, but somethings you can start doing on your own. Fill out the questionnaire below. Then read the tips to see what environmentally friendly practices you can do in and around your home.



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Water use:

Try to calculate how much water your household uses in a day. This might be a bit high right now, and that's ok! We'll give you tips to conserve water in the future.

☐ **Hand washing** (Keep up the hand washing! Wash for 20 seconds with soap and warm water!)

- How many times do you wash your hands in a day?
- Multiply this with the number of people in your house.
- Multiply that by 6—washing your hand for 20 seconds takes about 6 gallons of water

My household uses _____ gallons of water a day to wash our hands.

☐ **Showers and baths**

- How many times does someone take a shower or bath each day in your house?
- For each shower, multiply by 18 gallons.
- For each bath, multiply by 40 gallons.

My household uses _____ gallons of water a day to take showers or baths.

☐ **Flushing the toilet**

- How many times a day do you flush the toilet?
- Multiply this by the number of people in your house or count the flushes.
- Multiple this number by 5 gallons.

My household uses _____ gallons of water a day to flush the toilet.

☐ **Washing dishes**

- How many times does your family wash the dishes each day?
- If you use a dishwasher, you can even check the number of gallons your washing machine uses!



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- If you wash by hand, or can't check the water usage on your machine, multiply the number of dishwashing sessions by 10

My household uses _____ gallons of water a day to wash dishes.

☐ **Total:** The total number of gallons my house uses in a day is: _____ gallons

- The average American household uses 300 gallons of water in a day- how does yours compare?

Tips for saving water:

- Turn the water off when brushing your teeth.
- Take shorter showers or use slightly less water for a bath.
- When showering or bathing, put a bucket under the spout to catch the cold water before it gets warm. You can use the extra water to water plants!
- Flush less- if everyone in your house agrees, you can do "if it's yellow, let it mellow."

Yard and Outside Plants:

☐ How do you water your plants outside?

Tip: Try using water from a shower before it heats up, or making sure hoses are not on all day.

☐ What time of day do you usually water them?

Tip: Watering plants in the early morning or evening helps keep the water from evaporating. This is better for the plants and your water use!

☐ Do you use fertilizer on your lawn or plants?



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Tip: Try cutting back on chemical fertilizers and pesticides or eliminating them all together.

Trash and Recycling

☐ Does your neighborhood have a recycling service?

☐ Does your house recycle?

If so, check the materials that can and can't be recycled in your neighborhood:

☐ Paper

☐ Plastic- be sure to check which types or numbers!

☐ Cardboard

☐ Aluminum (cans)

☐ Glass

☐ Check the tops of your outdoor recycling and trash bins. Are they secure, or will they blow off?

Tip: Making sure trash and recycling can tops stay on can help keep things from getting blown out and around the neighborhood.

Litter

☐ Do you see any litter around your yard or neighborhood?

Like we saw in the watershed model, pieces of trash will get washed down into the watershed when it rains, causing pollution.

Tip: If you want, *safely* pick up the litter while wearing gloves and a face mask and throw it in the trash or recycling.

☐ Do you pick up after your dog?

Your furry friend's poop also gets washed into the watershed and the bacteria causes pollution.



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Tip: Pick up your dog's poop! You can even use biodegradable bags. This is something you can start doing on your own right now.

Reusable Household Items

Right now, disposable bags and cleaning supplies are the most sanitary options when grocery shopping or cleaning things off. Instead, you can make goals to use more reusable items in the future!

- ☐ Do you have reusable bags for grocery shopping?
- ☐ Think of a place in the house or car where you could put these, so you remember to bring them with you!
- ☐ Could you replace paper towels with cloth?

Tip: Find some old T-shirts, or old dish towels that could get dirty and be used as paper towels. **Check with an adult first before getting these dirty or cutting T-shirts!**