A carbon footprint is the amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) produced from everyday activities. This includes what you breathe out, and what is released from cars, electrical power plants, and the transportation and production of food. CO2 is a greenhouse gas that builds up and causes global warming; it is harmful to the health of all living things.

Fortunately, you can reduce your carbon footprint. Doing even a few things can make a difference.

**Reduce, reuse, recycle**
Buy products with minimal packaging, use your own containers when shopping, and buy in bulk to help reduce waste.

**Replace light bulbs**If every American home replaced only one light bulb with an Energy Star-rated light bulb, we would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by **9 billion pounds**, or the amount from 800,000 cars.

**Use less hot water**
Set your water heater at 120 degrees Fahrenheit, use low-flow showerheads, and wash clothes in warm or cold water to reduce use of hot water and the energy required to produce it.

**Drive less and drive smart**You will save 1 pound of carbon dioxide for every mile you don't drive. When you do drive, make sure your car is running well. For example, keep the right amount of air in your tires to improve your gas mileage by more than 3 percent.

**Use the "off" switch**
Save electricity and reduce global warming by turning off lights when you leave a room. Remember to turn off your computer, TV, and other electronics when not using them.

**Eat less meat**

Reducing the amount of beef, pork, and poultry you eat by a quarter and eating plant proteins instead, would save 82 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions per year.

**Eat locally grown**

Look for produce that is locally produced and in season. Find local farmers’ markets in this [*Minnesota Grown Directory*](https://minnesotagrown.com/search-directory/farmers-markets/).

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