

The Miami Herald

Posted on Mon, Apr. 20, 2009

Reduce your use of petroleum

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Oil dependency isn't found only at the gas pump. Petroleum is used to make waxes and plastics. Many items used daily soaps, balms and moisturizers all contain petroleum.

Petroleum is a non-renewable resource. Switching to products made with natural or renewable ingredients can help reduce oil dependency.

Here are five inexpensive ways to eliminate oil:

- **BUY THE KIDS PETROLEUM FREE CRAYONS:** Most crayons are made from paraffin wax which contains petroleum. But there are crayons made from renewable resources. The Beeswax Crayons from Stubby Pencil Studio are German-made crayons that are 25 percent beeswax. The crayons are made from all natural plant waxes and pigments. These jumbo crayons have a round shape and are also non-toxic. Packaged in a drawstring muslin pouch, recommended for children three and older. \$14.95 for 12 crayons at StubbyPencilStudio.com or call 503-412-9528.

- **SWITCH TO ALL-NATURAL SOAP:** Liquid soaps are packaged in plastic bottles which contain petroleum. Bar soaps can also be problematic if made with palm oil as the destruction of palm trees is endangering orangutans. An alternative is to use American made soaps free of palm oil. Soap and Paper Factory in New York makes 8-ounce bar soap free of waxes, petroleum and animal byproducts. Available in six scents, wrapped in paper. \$14 at SoapandPaperFactory.com.

- **STOP USING PLASTIC STRAWS:** Made with petroleum, plastic straws are a huge waste. And realistically, straws are nice but not a necessity. Straw fans can eliminate the waste by switching to a glass version. GlassDharma, is a collection of glass straws made in California by a glassblower. The Beautiful Bend is a nine inch straw with a slight tilt. The Decorative Dots has tiny dots on the side, available in seven colors and four sizes. The Simple Elegance is a straight straw available in four sizes. The straws start at \$6 and come with a lifetime guarantee. Accessories such as cleaners and cases are also available. Dishwasher safe. GlassDharma.com.

- **DITCH THE PETROLEUM JELLY:** Many lip balms are oil-based yet smeared all over lips? Gross. Opt for a natural version that organically moisturizes. The Perk lip balm from Crazy Rumors is a collection of coffee flavored lip balms. The balms are made with jojoba oil and organic shea butter. Other ingredients include extra virgin olive oil and soy wax. Perk is available in six scents including Coffee Bean and Irish Cream. Each tube is \$4, available at CrazyRumors.com or Whole Foods stores.

- **STOP USING SANDWICH BAGS:** Plastic sandwich baggies are made with petroleum. They are wasteful, expensive and not particularly convenient. Reusable containers are more eco-friendly but can be bulky in small lunchbox. One option is the Wrap-N-Mat. This flat mat wraps around a sandwich and also serves as a place mat. It has a PEVA liner, a material approved by the FDA for contact with food. Once open, it is 13-by-13 inches and wipes clean. \$6.95 available in four colors at ReusableBags.com.

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