



CAN WE STOP WASTING GOOD FOOD?

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Summer is a great season for picnics, barbeques, and celebrations – enjoying foods like cold salads, watermelon, grilled meats. If you are Trash Smart, you know that we can all do better with how we manage uneaten food. A 2021 waste composition study at Lanchester Landfill demonstrated that 15% of the trash was food waste, and most of that was characterized as edible. Although food does decompose, it also creates methane, a greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change.

Some Chester County residents have a compost bin in their yard, mixing yard waste with food scraps. Some folks pay a composting company to collect their food scraps curbside. While Chester County works on trying to minimize food waste disposal, with limited composting options, there are some behaviors you can change while you plan meals, food shop, cook, and clean the plates. Be Trash Smart; pledge to adopt even one action:

- Scan your kitchen, and plan meals with those ingredients before buying more perishable food.
- Use leftovers in an upcoming meal. An uneaten baked potato can be tomorrow's home fries.
- Mix bruised fruit with yogurt in a blender for a nutritious beverage.
- Create a weekly meal plan and stick to it. Just planning out 3-5 days and shopping for *those* fresh ingredients is a great start to reduce food waste.
- Check out the "Guest-imator" at www.savethefood.com to help you plan meals for special events.
- Date labels on foods are especially confusing, and most have little to do with food *safety*. Only baby formula has a legal mandate for a date label. An app such as FoodKeeper helps the public understand storage of food for freshness and *quality* (www.foodsafety.gov).
- Improve cooking skills to reduce undercooked and overcooked meals.
- Freeze leftover foods in anticipated portions. Date them for better quality use.
- Support your local farmers' markets.
- Donate only **USABLE, WANTED** food to food pantries.
- Learn to compost! Find composting resources at www.chestercountyswa.org.
- Take home leftovers when eating out or ask for smaller portions.

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