

## I quit rubbish

Written by Jo Liddell

We had always been pretty good with limited rubbish. Generally eating healthy and using cloth nappies meant we made less waste than the average household. But it was a bag of lollies that got me started. I was over rubbish, unwrapping it, picking it up, putting it in the bin, taking the rubbish to the gate and the same with recycling. All extra jobs I didn't need. My 5 kids, 9, 7, 4 and 2x2, had eaten a bag of lollies and the wrappers were on the floor. I missed who was responsible and they all blamed each other. So I banned lollies, not for health reasons, just for the extra work I didn't need. Cleaning the house was more rubbish, so I decided to quit rubbish. There is also the ethical side of using a plastic bag or meat tray for three minutes and then them remaining on the earth forever.

The change was much easier than I thought. Toothpaste seemed like a major, but it was really easy. All it is: 3 Tbsp coconut oil, 1.5 Tbsp baking soda, 30 drops of peppermint oil, optional adding crushed fluoride tablets + a compostable bamboo tooth brush (\$3.50). A benefit I didn't expect was the kids make no mess with it, with supermarket toothpaste it spread everywhere!

Bags are really easy! My large bags are EnviroSax, which can carry an enormous weight and fold down really small. I use Green collective and Onya bags for

my fruit. The Onya bags belong in my handbag and are always ready to go.

Cheese is the hardest thing to do, so hard that I haven't found the solution yet. I just want a 1kg block of Edam that won't leave a reminder on the earth forever. Ideas anyone?

I rarely go to the supermarket. Once you go 'off the trolley' you can see the supermarket for the trap that it is. Most things are in small packets so you always run out of things and need to go back and accidentally spend another \$50. I use home-grown food, fruit and veggie stores, Bin Inn and a butcher. At first this sounded like a lot, but I visit Binn Inn less than once a month. I take in my containers, tare them, then fill them. When you are buying a jam jar full of cumin as compared to a little packet at the supermarket you don't need to go so often. I also use Rotorua's organic club, Brown Owl. I can order online and pick up in a reusable box.

I take a container to a butcher, they tare the weight, then fill it with my choice. You can then put marinade straight in, freeze it and the packing won't rip and make it go freezer burnt, glass containers can go straight in the oven, a pet can't attack it when defrosting, the benefits go on....

The impact on the family has been great. It is easier to say 'choose any zero waste treat you like' rather than

'anything but lollies'. It is same for me. I always got a peanut slab at Mitre10. I couldn't say no to chocolate for eating healthy but I can for zero waste. The children naturally refuse wasteful things now. I also take more interest in packaged and processed food. Do you know the supermarket 99% fat free ham is only 50% pork? Rubbish products come in rubbish packaging.

3 ideas for busy mums:

1. Invest in a pressure cooker. This is true fast food but cheaper, healthier, doesn't involve clipping kids into the car and its easy to be rubbish free. In goes the frozen meat, Thai green curry, cut up veggies and 15 minutes later you have a great meal. The pressure cooker can cook dried beans in 15 minutes, much cheaper than cans.

2. Never have a birthday party again. Enjoy a cake and family times on the actual day, then have another day in the year for a non-birthday celebration. A winter birthday girl might have a swimming party with six friends. Much more enjoyable without the gifts, take home bags, rubbish, rubbish and more rubbish that go with most birthday parties. All that is left is the fun!

3. Google 'Mooncup'. Order one from the many brands and a couple of reusable pads for confidence while you trial. Give yourself 3 months.

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## Ideas for inside play

When my girls were little, I was sure there would be a time when I'd prepare educational play activities each evening and we'd 'messy play' together. However, the reality is that I have never, ever planned our play and I love messy play, just not in my house. As a result, I am always looking out for play options that can be pulled out in a flash when the restlessness and rain sets in! Here's some of my ideas alongside some ideas shared on Facebook last month:

**Coloured rice:** I made a batch yonks ago (it's so easy), but it's still around

and pouring it into the tea set seems to be quite entertaining! This is best played with after vacuuming - that way when you sweep up, you are less likely to get other bits with the rice.

**Baking:** To be honest, I can only handle twins in the kitchen on certain days and I've learned that items requiring butter and sugar to be creamed are best for us as then they can enjoy licking the beaters!

**Furniture huts:** I remember making these as a kid. We play a train variation and generally, end up taking all the

dolls and teddy bears as passengers to the shops or the library.

**Obstacle Course:** Our house isn't big enough for serious obstacles, but we couch-jump most days. The cushions end up everywhere and we have a thick play mat on the floor - the perfect landing pad.

**Play dough:** An oldie but a goodie. I like the non-cook recipes (Google it). If you don't have any on hand, it should only take five minutes and you'll have a new batch whipped up, and ready for the kids.