

# the truth about recyclable packaging

## did you know?

### 1 Choosing a material just because it's recyclable isn't necessarily better for the environment.

When choosing between packages made of different materials, recyclability is a poor predictor of environmental benefits.

### 2 Different materials have different impacts.

Materials are all different in terms of what they are made of and how they are turned into a package or product. Sometimes a recyclable package can have higher environmental impacts than a non-recyclable one.

### 3 Sometimes non-recyclable is better for the environment.

For example, a cardboard box is recyclable but often uses more energy and water, and results in more pollution than a flexible pouch for shipping similar products. The pouch isn't recyclable, and that's OK!

### 4 Recyclable is not the same as recycling.

While recyclable packaging is designed to be recycled; it doesn't mean that it is recycled. Recycling is the act of transforming discarded materials into new products. But, recyclable items, even when recycled may have higher impacts.

### 5 When in doubt, find out!

Things that can't be processed locally often contaminate the recycling process making the recycled materials less valuable. What recycling programs accept vary greatly, so know what actually gets recycled in your area, and only put clean, dry items in the bin.

#### Tips

- Know what actually gets recycled in your area.
- Change your default to reusable
- Dispose items not recycled responsibly



In 2018, Oregon DEQ released a series of reports that answered the question:  
"How well do popular packaging attributes correlate with net environmental benefit?"  
You can find the reports at <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/mm/production/Pages/Materials-Attributes.aspx>