

# REBECCA SNOW

**10 ways you can save money, improve your health, and reduce your impact on the environment.**

You can feed 3 birds with one worm. Call it a three-fer. 10 ways to optimize your efforts to save, be healthy and make the earth a better place for your children's children!

## **I. DRINK FILTERED WATER INSTEAD OF BOTTLED WATER**

Drinking water is great for your health, but bottled water can hurt your wallet, health, and the environment.

**COST:** A bottle of water typically costs about \$1.50; if you purchased just one bottle every day for a year that would equal **\$547.50** in just one year. Using a water filter system can save hundreds of dollars a year; there are several filters available, including the SOMA, which costs about \$50 for the glass carafe and about \$60 for a years supply of biodegradable filters made of coconut shell and silk- a total of **\$110**. Take a BPA free- or better yet, glass- water bottle with you on the go, or get a water filter just for the office!

**HEALTH:** Single use plastic water bottles often contain toxic chemicals that may disrupt endocrine function- a recent study found potentially health- altering chemicals in bottled water that are not present in tap water (Wagner, 2013). In addition, many brands of bottled water are actually just filtered tap water!

**ENVIRONMENT:** Single use water bottles cannot typically be recycled- so once you are done with that bottle, its headed for the landfill. It takes 17 million barrels of oil to create all of the plastic bottles used in the US (Pacific Institute, 2007).

**Bottom Line:** *Save hundred of dollars a year, reduce your exposure to health-disrupting chemicals, and protect the environment.*



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## Resources:

SOMA website: <https://www.drinksoma.com/>

Bottled Water Facts: <http://www.banthebottle.net/bottled-water-facts/>

Tapped documentary about water: <http://www.hulu.com/watch/192680>

EWG safe drinking water guide: [http://www.ewg.org/tapwater/EWG\\_safedrinkingwater.pdf](http://www.ewg.org/tapwater/EWG_safedrinkingwater.pdf)

Water Quality in your community: <http://water.epa.gov/drink/local/index.cfm>

## References:

Bottled Water and Energy: Getting to 17 Million Barrels. (2007, December 1). Retrieved April 13, 2015.

Wagner, M., Schlüsener, M. P., Ternes, T. A., & Oehlmann, J. (2013). Identification of putative steroid receptor antagonists in bottled water: combining bioassays and high-resolution mass spectrometry. *PLoS one*, 8(8), e72472.

## 2. BREW YOUR OWN COFFEE AT HOME

Coffee is a staple in most people's lives, but standing in line at the coffee shop every morning can really take a toll in many ways:



**COST:** A Grande (12oz) cup of regular coffee at a typical coffee shop is **\$1.95**. One pound of coffee makes about 320 ounces of coffee (Starbucks, 2015), which is about twenty-seven 12oz cups. At \$11.95 a bag, each "Grande" you make at home is approximately **44 cents**. Over a month, the difference is \$45.50; over a year, the difference is **\$551!** Longer-term savings? According to the USA Today Coffee Calculator tool, the cost for at home brew for 30 years is **\$867**- compare that to 30

years of coffee at Starbucks for a whopping **\$22,995!**

**HEALTH:** Like special coffee drinks from your local coffee shop? Regular old 'joe' is your best bet and black is best. But even if you don't like it black, with regular coffee you control the sugar and fat and can keep the calories low. Compare these...

### COMPARE CALORIES

Freshly brewed 12 oz Coffee with 1 Tblsp creamer and 1 tsp sugar	50 calories.
Starbucks Skinny Vanilla Latte, Grande	120 calories
Starbucks Grande Ice Café Mocha with Whipped Cream	350 calories

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**ENVIRONMENT:** The vast majority of disposable coffee cups sold each day are not recycled due to an interior plastic lining that makes it challenging (and expensive) to recycle. Just one cup a day means 365 non-recycled cups a year- per person! Minimize waste with reusable coffee mugs. Bonus: Keep your coffee grounds for an eco-friendly fertilizer for your garden!

**Bottom Line:** *Make coffee at home and save hundreds of dollars- and calories! - a year and protect the environment from paper disposable cups. Plus, no waiting in long lines to get your java fix!*

## Resources:

Brew Guide from Stumptown Coffee: <http://stumptowncoffee.com/brew-guides/>

Online Coffee Cost Calculator from USA Today:

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2014/07/22/coffee-prices-starbucks-cost/12991971/>

Homemade Healthy Coffee Drink Recipes: <http://www.mnn.com/food/beverages/blogs/30-homemade-and-healthier-starbucks-drink-recipes>

Starbucks nutrition information

[http://www.starbucks.com/menu/catalog/nutrition?drink=all#view\\_control=nutrition](http://www.starbucks.com/menu/catalog/nutrition?drink=all#view_control=nutrition)

## References:

Minter, A. (2014, April 7). Why Starbucks Won't Recycle Your Cup. Retrieved April 13, 2015.

Starbucks Coffee Preparation & Equipment FAQs. (2015, April 1). Retrieved April 13, 2015.

## 3. EAT LESS MEAT, MORE VEGETARIAN

*Beans, beans, good for the heart. The more you eat, the less you infarct. – Jim Duke, PhD*

**COST:** The average cost for a pound of dried beans is \$1.50. The average cost for a pound of chicken (whole, bone-in) is also about \$1.50. One pound of dried beans yields about 6 cups of cooked beans- about **9-12** servings. One pound of whole, bone in chicken yields only **3-4** servings. Per pound, beans are the cost-effective choice (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015).

**HEALTH:** Meats contain mostly protein and saturated fats; beans typically have protein, complex carbohydrates, and fiber as well as unsaturated fats. Studies have shown that beans and legume intake can help lower serum cholesterol (Bazzano et al, 2011), improved glycemic controls in Type 2 Diabetics, and reduced



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systolic blood pressure (Jenkins et al 2012). Some people may have digestive issues with beans and legumes, but generally most people can tolerate them well. The more you eat beans- or any high fiber food- the greater the likelihood your digestive tract will become accustomed to

the increased fiber; start increasing the amount slowly to reduce any gastrointestinal side effects.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Environmental benefits of a plant-based diet are illustrated by data from the United Nations and other major organizations. A review in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, compares the effect of plant-based and animal-based diets on the environment:

- Meat based food system requires more resources than a plant based one- each calorie of meat protein requires **25 kcal** of fossil fuel compared to a calorie of plant protein that requires **2.2 kcal** of fossil fuel
- The livestock in the US consume a vast majority of grain resources- more than 7 times as much as is consumed by people

**Bottom Line:** Reduce hormone and toxin intake from factory-farmed meat, numerous benefits to the environment and save money

## Resources

21-Day Kickstart to eating vegan <http://www.21daykickstart.org/>

The vegan Chef's recipes <http://www.veganchef.com/>

Vegetarian restaurants in the DC area <http://vegdc.com/>

## References:

Average Retail Food and Energy Prices, U.S. City Average and South Region. (2015, February 1). Retrieved April 13, 2015.

Bazzano, L. A., Thompson, A. M., Tees, M. T., Nguyen, C. H., & Winham, D. M. (2011). Non-soy legume consumption lowers cholesterol levels: a meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Nutrition, Metabolism and Cardiovascular Diseases*, 21(2), 94-103.

Jenkins, D. J., Kendall, C. W., Augustin, L. S., Mitchell, S., Sahye-Pudaruth, S., Mejia, S. B., ... & Josse, R. G. (2012). Effect of legumes as part of a low glycemic index diet on glycemic control and cardiovascular risk factors in type 2 diabetes mellitus: a randomized controlled trial. *Archives of internal medicine*, 172(21), 1653-1660.

Pimentel, D., & Pimentel, M. (2003). Sustainability of meat-based and plant-based diets and the environment. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 78(3), 660S-663S.

## 4. WALK OR RIDE A BICYCLE TO GET PLACES

This may not be possible for everyone, but there are often ways to get more physical activity in one's life while cutting costs. Most modern conveniences use the earth's natural resources and spare us from physical labor, i.e. snow blower versus shoveling. The truth is, we need more physical labor and the earth has limited resources.

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**COST:** You can save money by:

1. Raking your own leaves instead of using a leaf blower
2. Cooking your own food instead of going out or ordering takeout
3. Wash your own car instead of going to a car wash
4. Clean your house instead of hiring cleaners
5. Walk your dog instead of hiring a dog walker
6. Carry your golf clubs instead of getting a cart

You can buy inexpensive bikes at many places, including thrift stores (get a bike mechanic to give it a once over before you ride it), and walking requires nothing more than a good pair of shoes.

**HEALTH:** Any activity that gets you up and moving around will burn calories and improve your health! Often we think that exercise has to be all or nothing... in the gym with spandex. Moving your body, doing more around the house counts and improves your health.

A review of physical activity's role in health and disease stated that on average an increase of physical activity by 1,000 Kcal per week reduces all cause mortality (death) by 20% (Warburton, Nicol and Bredin, 2006). WOW! Do you know how easy it is to get 1,000 Kcal of activity a week? If a 185 lb adult cooked 1 hour a day instead of watching TV they would burn 546 calories more that week, add to that a moderate paced 15 walk daily and BOOM you've got an extra 1,000 kcal a week.

Check out the resources below and figure out what it would take for you to get an extra 1,000 kcal a week.

Also, getting unplugged supports our emotional health as well! Spending time outdoors being active and with other people being active has far greater benefit to our emotional and spiritual health than spending time on electronic devices.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Conserve fossil fuels and burn your own: walking or riding a bike requires no fuel other than yours!

**Bottom Line:** *get physical activity, be healthier, save on gas \$, get a natural endorphin high from physical activity and reduce carbon emissions*

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## Resources:

Healthy Harvard, amount of calories burned for various activities

<http://www.health.harvard.edu/diet-and-weight-loss/calories-burned-in-30-minutes-of-leisure-and-routine-activities>

Exercise burn tool – find out how many calories you burn for a daily activity

<http://www.myfoodrecord.com/exercise/exerciseburn>

## References

Warburton, D. E., Nicol, C. W., & Bredin, S. S. (2006). Prescribing exercise as preventive therapy. *Cmaj*, 174(7), 961-974.

Warburton, D. E., Nicol, C. W., & Bredin, S. S. (2006). Health benefits of physical activity: the evidence. *Cmaj*, 174(6), 801-809.

Warburton, D. E., Nicol, C. W., & Bredin, S. S. (2006). Prescribing exercise as a preventative therapy. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 174(7), 961-974.

## 5. EAT YOUR WEEDS, DON'T SPRAY THEM

Your backyard is a medicine cabinet just waiting to be discovered. Don't kill those weeds, eat them.

**COST:** Wild weeds and foods are not only free but can be extremely nutrient dense and tasty foods!

Your backyard can be a great place to find friendly weeds for eating.

**HEALTH:** The widely studied Mediterranean diet, specifically the diet of the isle of Crete, may owe some of its health promoting effects to the high consumption of wild greens, which contain many phytonutrients and essential fatty acids. Which wild leaves can you safely eat? Chickweed, purslane, garlic mustard, stinging nettles, and dandelion leaves can all be sautéed, added to smoothies or salads, quiches, or homemade pesto. Wild weeds tend to be more nutrient dense than cultivated varieties. Only eat weeds that you can identify as not poisonous and that have not been sprayed with pesticides, and wash them well before you eat!

**ENVIRONMENT:** Picking and eating weeds or foraging can reduce the amount of pesticides that would be used to eliminate them.

**Bottom:** Save money, reduce pesticide exposure for people, plants and local eco-system, get more medicinal compounds from your food.

## Resources:

Wild Edibles App (to identify wild greens): <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/wild-edibles-full/id431504588?mt=8>

Edible wild food recipes <http://www.ediblewildfood.com/wild-food-recipes.aspx>

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Foraging guidelines <http://www.wildedible.com/foraging>

## References:

- Kallas, J. (2010). *Edible wild plants*. Gibbs Smith.
- Trichopoulou, A., Vasilopoulou, E., Hollman, P., Chamalides, C., Foufa, E., Kaloudis, T., ... & Theophilou, D. (2000). Nutritional composition and flavonoid content of edible wild greens and green pies: a potential rich source of antioxidant nutrients in the Mediterranean diet. *Food Chemistry*, 70(3), 319-323.
- Weed, Susun. (1989). *Healing Wise*. Woodstock: Ash Tree Publishing.
- Gibbons, Euell. (1996). *Stalking the Healthful Herbs*. New York: David McKay Company, Inc.

## Green Cakes Recipe:

Green Cakes: 4 Servings: Each serving contains 91 calories, 9 grams of protein, and 3 grams of fiber

3 c tightly packed leafy greens such as dandelion greens, or nettles

3 eggs

2 slices gluten-free or whole wheat bread, broken into pieces

½ medium onion, chopped

2 garlic cloves, minced

½ c grated Parmesan cheese

1 tsp sea salt

½ tsp ground black pepper

4 Tbsp any combination of fresh basil, parsley, or cilantro, or 4 tsp dried

1 Tbsp butter or coconut oil for cooking

Place greens, eggs and bread in a food processor or blender, and blend until thoroughly chopped and blended. Stir in all other ingredients. Scoop mix into pancakes on an oiled pan. Brown cakes on both sides. Serve and enjoy!

## 6. RE-USABLE FEMININE PRODUCTS

The average woman will have between 350 and 500 periods in her lifetime, and women who use tampons will go through nearly 11,000 in her lifetime (Sutton et al, 2005)

**COST:** Women in the US spend \$3 billion on tampons and pads yearly. One box of tampons per month is approximately \$7; for a year that is \$84. For five years, the total cost is **\$420**. The Keeper, a reusable cup is approximately \$30 and will last 5 years. Glad Rags, reusable cloth pads, last for several years and typically cost about \$10-15 each. Over 5 years, 10 Glad Rags and one Keeper Cup will save you \$240 vs. tampons!

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**HEALTH:** Most commercially available tampons and pads contain GMO cotton, pesticides, bleach, rayon, synthetic fragrances, and small amount of the toxic chemicals dioxins and furans- all of which you would never eat! The chemicals can be absorbed into the body through the delicate lining of the vagina.

FDA reports that dioxin levels are one part per 3 trillion. This is very small but over a lifetime could be more significant. Dioxin acts to suppress immune function (Sutton, 2005) and some studies have shown a connection between dioxin and endometriosis, with 3.6 times increased risk of endometriosis for women who use tampons 14 years or longer (Darrow et al, 1993). Tampons made with organic cotton are available, but typically cost almost double and are not widely available.

**ENVIRONMENT:** A vast amount of resources are required to produce tampons, including the plastic and cotton, as well as fossil fuels (Mazgaj, 2006) after they have been used, they can take months to biodegrade.

**Bottom Line:** *reduce toxins absorbed through the skin, save \$ over time, and reduce waste in landfills*

## Resources:

Read more about ingredients in tampons and pads from the Chem Fatale report from the Women's voices from the Earth, November 2013

<http://www.womensvoices.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Chem-Fatale-Report.pdf>

Party in my pants pads <http://partypantspads.com/>

Gladrags <http://gladrags.com/>

Divacups <http://divacup.com/>

The Keeper <http://keeper.com/>

## References:

Darrow, S. L., Vena, J. E., Batt, R. E., Zielezny, M. A., Michalek, A. M., & Selman, S. (1993). Menstrual cycle characteristics and the risk of endometriosis. *Epidemiology*, 4(2), 135-142.

Livoti, Dr. Carol, and Elizabeth Topp. 2004. *Vaginas: An Owner's Manual*. New York, NY: Thunder's Mouth Press.

Mazgaj, M., Yaramenka, K., & Malovana, O. (2006). Comparative Life Cycle Assessment of Sanitary Pads and Tampons. *Report of course "Life Cycle Assessment, IN1800", Royal Institute of Technology Stockholm*.

Scranton, A. *Chem Fatale: Potential Health Effects of Toxic Chemicals in Feminine Care Products*. Missoula, MT: Women's Voices for the Earth (November 2013).

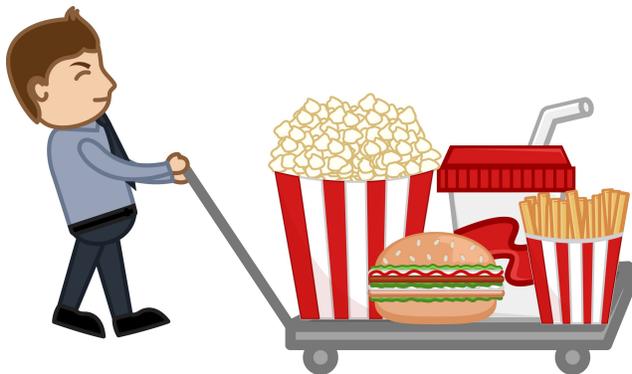
Sutton, C., Adamson, G. D., & Jones, K. D. (Eds.). (2005). *Modern management of endometriosis*. CRC Press.

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## 7. COOK AND EAT AT HOME

It could be easily argued that eating outside the home is a major cause of obesity in our country. Let's reclaim our kitchens for the sake of our families.

**COST:** Cooking and preparing your meals at home can lead to significant cost savings as compared to eating out at restaurants or getting take-out. Planning our your meals and taking a list to the store results in even fewer trips to the grocery store, saving you gas, time, and money.



**HEALTH:** When you cook at home using fresh ingredients, you know exactly what is going into your meals. Even if you use some packaged food, a quick scan at the label will make you aware of what you are putting in your body. Many restaurants do not provide a list of ingredients or amounts- the innocent looking chicken breast might be cooked swimming in oil and covered with salt! A

surprising number of restaurants are still using trans fats in food prep. Plus, think of the calories you can burn while cooking your food- 30 minutes of cooking uses about 110 calories, plus another 155 for shopping, not to mention the 150 calories for cleaning. Standing in line for take out? A measly 56 calories, total!

**ENVIRONMENT:** Eating at home reduces waste from take-out boxes and plastic silverware. You also reduce carbon emissions by staying home. Reduce wear and tear on your car, and time sitting in traffic. All of that time can be quality family- or self- time to enjoy your home cooked meal.

**Bottom Line:** *Save \$ on food, reduce carbon emissions from driving, get physical activity while cooking and grocery shopping, reduce intake of trans fats, sugar, salt and other chemicals in restaurant food, create family-social time, set a good example for your children*

### Resources:

We Got Real – meal plans for a family of 4 for \$80 or less <http://wegotreal.com/frugal-real-food-meal-plan/>

One week of healthy meals for a family of 4 under \$100 shopping at Whole Foods

<http://pickyeaterblog.com/one-week-of-healthy-meals-on-a-100-budget-and-a-whole-foods-giveaway/>

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## 8. GROW VEGETABLES IN YOUR OWN YARD

Even the smallest patch of soil can usually grow something... how does *your* garden grow?



**COST:** The basics to set up a home garden are simple: nutrient rich soil, seeds, gardening tools, and any containers/fencing required to keep soil in and pests out! The cost to set up a garden can vary depending on the type of the plants- squash, green beans tomatoes tend to be the least expensive to buy and maintain. A fruit plant like strawberries or a fig tree might cost a little more, but will provide fruit for years to come. Don't have a yard? A windowsill herb garden- complete with seeds- can cost as little as \$10, or check out your local community gardens for a plot you can call your own!

**HEALTH:** Growing veggies and fruits in your garden gives you control of the soil quality, pesticide use, and peak harvesting time. Gardening can burn between 200-300 calories per hour (Harvard Health, 2004) and getting a little sun exposure can help your body produce the important

nutrient Vitamin D. Children are often inspired to eat vegetables that they have a hand in growing.

**ENVIRONMENT:** In our global economy, produce at your supermarket has traveled from China, Peru, Holland, from all over the world. The fossil fuels required to get that tomato on your table is extraordinary! Eating locally grown produce is a big contribution you can make to our the health of our environment. Whether that is growing your own, using a CSA or visiting your local farmer's market. US farmland has been rapidly decreasing over the last 50 years and this is a concern for our future. Grow your veggies and fruits with non-GMO seeds, without toxic pesticides, and you've made a positive impact to the quality of the air, water, and soil around you. Bonus: Coffee grounds make an excellent eco-friendly fertilizer

**Bottom Line:** *Spend time outdoors, eat food fresh off the vine, get your kids interested in healthy food, and lower your grocery bill*

### Resources:

Community Gardens: [www.CommunityGarden.org](http://www.CommunityGarden.org)

Be INSPIRED by Ron Finley, a "guerilla gardener" in south central LA

[http://www.ted.com/talks/ron\\_finley\\_a\\_guerilla\\_gardener\\_in\\_south\\_central\\_la?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/ron_finley_a_guerilla_gardener_in_south_central_la?language=en)

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## References:

Calories burned in 30 minutes for people of three different weights - Harvard Health. (2004, July 1). Retrieved April 13, 2015.

Information on the latest vitamin D news and research. (2015, April 1). Retrieved April 13, 2015.

## 9. BUY GENTLY USED CLOTHING AND FURNITURE

One man's trash is another man's treasure!

**COST:** Clothing, home goods, and other items found at thrift stores can be up to 90% cheaper than new retail items. A vintage blouse costs between \$3 and \$5 from Goodwill; a new top at a typical department store costs about \$25. A thrifted nightstand might set you back \$6, whereas a new one might cost upwards of \$200! You don't even have to go to a thrift store- get creative and host a "naked lady" party. Have all your friends bring their old clothes and trade! Check ebay.com or shopgoodwill.com to search for gently used clothing, home wares, and more from the comfort of your home!

**HEALTH:** Newer clothing may contain flame-retardants and it is useful to wash clothing before you wear it to help remove these chemicals. Cotton clothing breaths better than

polyester. Some outdated fabrics may be more harmful than newer varieties, so purchase natural fibers like cotton for your safest choice.

**ENVIRONMENT:** Purchasing gently used clothing reduces the demand for new clothing and keeps clothes out of landfills.

**Bottom Line:** *reduce toxin (i.e. flame retardant) exposure from new clothing, save \$, reduce landfill waste and resources needed to produce new clothes.*

## Resources:

Salvation Army [www.salvationarmy.org](http://www.salvationarmy.org)

Ebay [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)

Craigslist [www.craigslist.com](http://www.craigslist.com)

Find a thrift store in your area: <http://www.thethriftshopper.com/>

## References:

Recycled Clothing Facts <http://homeguides.sfgate.com/recycled-clothing-79332.html>

The Truth About the Clothes We Wear: How fashion impacts health and the environment by Beth Greer [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/beth-greer/fashion-environment\\_b\\_3527049.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/beth-greer/fashion-environment_b_3527049.html)

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## 10. CUT BACK ON ALCOHOL AND CIGARETTES

Cigarettes and alcohol are both addictive substances and even small amounts can affect your health.

**COST:** Depending on where you live, a pack-a day habit could cost up to **\$12.85**; over twenty years this adds up to a staggering **\$93.81** (Maranjian, 2014).

**HEALTH:** Alcohol intake and cigarettes may cause oxidative damage to a variety of organs, including the liver and lungs and may adversely impact nutritional status of Vitamins E, C, (Lecompte et al, 1994), beta-carotene (Galan et al, 2005), selenium and Vitamin D (Bjørneboe). The resulting tissue damage and nutrient deficiencies from smoking cigarettes can contribute to a number of health conditions, including lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), increased blood pressure, macular degeneration and many more (CDC, 2015).

**ENVIRONMENT:** Air pollution, litter, harm to wildlife, and forest destruction from fires—these are just some of the impacts that cigarettes have on the environment.

**Bottom Line:** *The only things you have to gain from quitting or reducing smoking or alcohol intake are your money, your health, and the environment.*

### References:

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