

150 Ways to Go Green

- Convert high-energy consuming office lights to energy-efficient fluorescent lighting
- Install programmable thermostats
- Add reflective glass (low E) windows
- Install mini-fluorescent fixtures
- Install a central vacuum that uses no water and has an amalgam trap
- Convert heating and cooling return-air vents from the ceiling return vents in the summer to the floor return vents during the winter
- Install three high-efficiency heating and ventilating units on the roof
- Replace the old 30-gallon hot water heater with an efficient ten-gallon one
- Recycle the big five: aluminum, glass, plastic, paper and steel
- Install water-saving toilets
- Walk to work or drive a hybrid
- Sign up for your energy company's summer energy savings program
- Use paint that does not include Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)
- Use office furniture made from recycled or reclaimed wood
- Consider using windmill-generated electricity for power consumption
- Install energy-efficient appliances (washer, dryer, dishwasher)
- Go paperless! Utilize a virtual office for patient charting, billing and radiography
- Use LCD computer screens instead of CRT screens
- Use your local recycling program
- If traditional x-rays are taken, recycle fixer and developer solutions
- Recycle lead foil from x-rays
- Use less harmful surface disinfectants to clean and sterilize
- Consider installation of linoleum for flooring
- Use stainless steel prophy cups instead of disposable prophy-containing cups
- Implement an environmentally-friendly sterilization program
- Use reusable stainless steel high- and low-volume, surgical/endodontic suction tips as an alternative to disposable plastic
- Use reusable glass irrigation syringe as a substitute for disposable plastic
- Use biodegradable disposable cups instead of regular paper cups
- Use chlorine-free, high post-consumer recycled paper products instead of traditional paper products
- Use disposable, plastic or paper barriers only when necessary
- Use sensor-operated faucets
- Use low flow faucets and fixtures
- Turn off your computer when you leave the office for the day
- Turn off your lights when you leave the room.
- Teach your patients to turn off the faucet when they brush
- Use a water-free hand disinfectant to clean hands
- Carpool to work with colleagues
- Bike to work!
- Install a dimmer lighting system, which saves electricity and only uses as much light as needed depending on the office's natural light
- Distribute organic toothbrushes made from recycled yogurt cups to your patients after their visit
- Install water-free urinals
- Install low-flush or dual-flush toilets
- Provide brochures to patients that contain green tips in the waiting room
- Take public transportation
- Install an amalgam separator
- Partner with businesses that have sustainable principals. For example, use a green bank, recycling service or green architect/engineer to help with office design
- Send appointment reminders on recycled paper, or through email or text message
- Print double-sided
- Talk to dental students about green dental practices, where to buy supplies, and recycling
- For those serious about their practices going completely green, find an office that is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified by the U.S. Green Building Council
- Keep in mind that simple energy efficiency modifications - like lighting and water changes will pay for themselves in two to three years
- Buy recycled file folders
- Use Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified wood flooring
- Think about your day-to-day work habits and how you can lighten your environmental impact on the most basic levels
- Purchase organic or eco-friendly scrubs
- Recycle computer parts and electronics
- Install solar electric panels
- Install solar water heaters
- Consider developing an office policy on "green purchasing" - while price should play a major role in purchasing decisions, environmentally-friendliness is an equally important factor to consider
- Consider switching to products that use minimal packaging to reduce waste
- Install motion detectors and timers for lights
- Install skylights to enhance lighting and keep it energy free
- Educate your patients not only about oral health but protecting the health of the environment
- Use digital thermometers instead of mercury thermometers
- Reuse rechargeable batteries
- "Tune up" your heating/cooling systems
- Cut back on the number of printers in the practice

- Use your copier's reduction feature
- Edit letters, budgets, paperwork on screen instead of hardcopy
- Request to be removed from receiving dental junk mail
- Use hot air dryers in washrooms instead of paper towels
- When looking to buy a new practice check to see if it is close to public transportation
- Reuse old envelopes for scratch paper
- Receive and store financial statements electronically
- Buy indoor plants
- Bring your own mug and dishware for meals at the office
- If possible, reduce your driving each month by a small percent
- Water your lawn at the appropriate/designated time of day
- When feasible, buy local
- Have staff members plant and adopt a tree
- When you wash your hands, turn the water off while you lather
- Drink tap water, not bottled water
- Plant rain gardens
- Run the dishwasher when it is full
- If possible, start an office garden
- Use shredded paper for packaging material
- Keep office toilets in good working order, check for leaks
- Insulate your hot water pipes
- Fix a leaky faucet
- Weather-strip and caulk your office windows
- Use cloth napkins and dish towels in practice break areas
- Pay practice bills online
- Fix broken items instead of throwing them away
- Purchase smart power strips for electronics
- Clean or replace heater/air conditioner filters
- Run a practice energy audit
- Turn off the water when brushing your teeth
- Get rid of aerosol products
- Recycle or refill toner cartridges
- Learn how much energy and water you are using in your practice
- Eliminate electronics that sleep on a standby setting; they continue to pull a current even when "turned off"
- Be aware that AC adapters on some power cables pull current so pull the plug when not in use
- Consider solar chargers for charging cell phones, PDA, laptops, etc
- Utilize soy based instead of oil based products
- Install solar or tinted window shades
- Install solar panels that are connected to your power company to receive credit for the power you generate
- Install wind turbines
- Eliminate fax cover sheets by using fax directory stickers or use software that allows you to send and receive faxes directly from your computer
- Purchase recyclable letterhead, envelopes, fax paper, and business cards
- Purchase LED or electroluminescent (LEC) exit signs to improve energy efficiency
- Use ceiling fans to promote air circulation and reduce the need for air conditioning
- Install occupancy sensors to adjust set points for air conditioning and heating equipment
- Plant native shrubs or trees near windows for shade
- Replace windows with double pane energy-efficient windows
- Post signs in practice restrooms and break areas encouraging water conservation
- Reduce the use of toxic pesticides
- Change and recycle vacuum pump filter screens at least once per month or as directed by the manufacturer
- Have a licensed recycling contractor or hazardous waste hauler remove your amalgam wastes
- Do business with other "green" vendors
- Inform your patients about public transportation options and post transit schedules and routes
- Purchase sealants, adhesives and other restorative materials in package sizes, which will allow all the contents to be used during the procedure
- Post steps you are taking to be a "green" dental office in your waiting or patient rooms
- Know your recycling rules and what you can and cannot recycle!
- Bring your meals to work in reusable containers
- Use digital versions of journals and publications
- Purchase recycled trash bags
- Use HEPA filters
- Remove TVs from the waiting room!
- Install environmentally friendly cabinetry (no added urea-formaldehyde)
- Consider using recycled sheetrock and denim for acoustical insulation
- Install chair covers made of organic bamboo and organic cotton
- Clearly label recycling containers in accessible areas for patients and staff to encourage recycling and reuse
- Consider stocking all-natural oral care products, from toothpaste to mouthwash
- Perform regular maintenance and check-ups on mechanical equipment
- Consider using stainless steel suction tips and saliva ejectors
- Clean accumulated dust and dirt off fans to ensure quality performance
- Market your practice as a socially-responsible practice
- Enclose patient giveaways in degradable plastic bags
- Implement an instrument recycling program
- Implement strict operating procedures for staff to ensure toxic chemicals don't pollute the environment
- Stock recycled toilet paper, paper towels and tissue
- Review your waste volumes and costs and implement opportunities to reduce both
- Install biodegradable ceiling and/or wall panels
- Educate your patients about your "green" dental office
- If building a practice, recycle unused building materials
- Reuse shipping boxes
- Seek out a recycling center that recycles light bulbs
- Install a trash compactor
- Research local, state and federal tax incentives for earning Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) certification
- Plan the office layout to maximize natural light and ventilation

Just do something! Start with small steps that work on any budget and don't require a lot of effort!