

LESS POLLUTING MEDICAL DEVICES

Inhalers for Asthma and Chronic Bronchitis

Propellant gas inhalers for asthma or chronic bronchitis produce a large amount of greenhouse gases



Medical materials have a significant impact on the environment, whether it be bandages, creams, inhalers, disinfectants, masks, or plastic packaging (for any medication or medical equipment). Cutting down on the most polluting medical materials is an essential step to protect our planet.



Disinfectants and Hand Sanitizers

Most medical disinfectant solutions and hand sanitizers are made from industrial **alcohol derived from fossil resources** (oil, gas).

Their viscosity is ensured by **synthetic polymers and microplastics that cause pollution**. Disinfectants are often packaged in single-use plastic bottles.



There are disinfectants **produced in Switzerland from organic alcohols** (e.g., from beets) and stored in **reusable bottles**. In many cases, it is worth considering whether simple soap and water washing might suffice.²



Plastics

Fine particules (microplastics) from packaging **end up in nature and in our food at a rate of 5 grams per week per person (the equivalent of a credit card!)**. Microplastics cause inflammation and oxidative stress, which may be linked to cardiovascular issues and an increased risk of cancer.



Bandages

Bandages can contain a mixture of cotton and non-degradable plastics with a significant environmental impact. Additionally, transportation and packaging contribute to the overall environmental footprint.

THE SUSTAINABLE PRESCRIPTION



- Prioritize powder-based asthma treatments (possible from age 6).
- Choose cotton-free dressings (containing degradable fibres).
- Choose locally produced products.
- Limit prescriptions and favor exact doses (some pharmacies offer unit-dose sales).³
- Reduce the use of gloves, masks, and bandages to the strict minimum.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS



- Reduction of carbon footprint
- Less pollution from microplastics in nature



HEALTH BENEFITS

- Less pollution in the environment
- Reduction of intake of microplastics



REFERENCES

1. Forter M. Rund 900000 Asthmasprays mit Klimagas pro Jahr. Oekoskop 2022 Mar 15. Available at: https://www.aefu.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/ae-fu-data/b_documents/oekoskop/Oekoskop_22_1_DS.pdf

2. La revue Prescrire. Nettoyage des petites plaies cutanées superficielles (écorchures, éraflures). 2008. N° 301: pp. 844-845.

3. Sohlbank D. La vente de médicaments à l'unité testée pour lutter contre le gaspillage. Radio Télévision Suisse. Available at: <https://www.rts.ch/info/regions/neuchatel/11141801-la-vente-de-medicaments-a-lunite-testee-pour-lutter-contre-le-gaspillage.html>