

## 9. Inspire

- **Green teams:** create a green team to lead sustainability initiatives, share eco-friendly tips and train employees on sustainable practices.
- **Promote awareness:** display environmental posters and educational materials throughout the facility. Set up reading corners with selected reading material for staff and patients.

## 10. Be part of something bigger

- **Community projects:** get involved in sustainability projects and join forces for greater impact.
- **Networking:** promote the exchange of experiences and implement green ideas, such as with the Green Hospital Associations.
- **Green certification:** aim for certifications like ISO 14001 to demonstrate commitment to sustainability.
- **Green pilot station:** test small measures to make hospital processes more sustainable, such as using recycled materials for furniture or increasing the number of green plants, offering vegetarian, regional cuisine, etc.

By incorporating these simple steps into your daily routines, you can make a significant contribution to a healthier planet. Every small action pays off and together we can create a more sustainable future for everyone. Start today and make a difference! Together for a sustainable tomorrow!

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# 10 Simple steps for a greener lifestyle in healthcare

How to take simple steps towards a more  
sustainable healthcare system?



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# 10 Simple steps for a greener lifestyle in healthcare

In healthcare, sustainability is increasingly important. As caregivers and support staff, you play a key role in promoting greener practices. Encouraging healthier lifestyles helps reduce overweight and obesity and related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and some cancers, while improving muscle strength, well-being, quality of life, longevity, and achieving significant cost savings.

Here are ten simple steps to make your daily work more sustainable:

## 1. Reduce waste

- **Minimize single-use items:** replace single-use plastics with reusable or recyclable alternatives.
- **Paperless documentation:** transition to digital records and communications. Utilize electronic forms and notes. If printing is necessary, print double-sided.
- **Nudging:** small stickers on paper towel dispensers with the tip “Take 2” can help reduce paper waste.

## 2. Recycle

- **Proper disposal:** set up designated bins for recycling, composting, and biohazard waste. Ensure staff is well-informed about proper waste segregation methods.

## 3. Use eco-friendly products

- **Second-hand furniture:** opt for second-hand or refurbished furniture and equipment.
- **Green products:** choose environmentally friendly products with certifications like the EU ecolabel and choose suppliers who prioritize sustainability.

## 4. Conserve energy

- **Efficient lighting:** turn off lights in unoccupied rooms and encourage natural lighting or motion detectors.
- **Nudging:** stickers with tips like “Burn calories, not electricity – take the stairs!”
- **Optimize heating and cooling:** adjust thermostats to avoid excessive heating or cooling. Regularly maintain HVAC systems (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning).

## 5. Save water

- **Turn off the tap:** don't leave the water running and repair leaking taps immediately.
- **Smart cleaning:** use water-saving devices and adopt dry cleaning methods where applicable. Be mindful of water usage during cleaning routines.
- **Service water:** recycled wastewater can be used for flushing toilets, washing machines, and irrigation.

## 6. Move greener

- **Green transportation:** promote the use of public transport and short journeys to work by bike and on foot. Provide bike pumps, bike racks or secure parking spaces.
- **Bundle appointments:** combine examination appointments to reduce patient journeys to the hospital.
- **Composting:** implement composting for organic waste like food scraps. Use the compost to enrich facility gardens or donate it to community gardens.
- **Narcotic gas recycling:** this can reduce tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- **Explant recycling:** the recycling of medical devices plays a central role in ecological sustainability.

## 7. Eat greener

- **Local and organic:** purchase locally-produced and organic food for staff meals and patient nutrition.
- **Meatless meals:** offer meat-free meals once or twice a week to capitalize on the benefits of plant-based proteins.

## 8. Personal responsibility

- **Lead by example:** inspire patients and colleagues by practicing and advocating for sustainability. Simple habits like taking the stairs instead of the lift can make a big difference.
- **Continual improvement:** regularly review and improve your green practices to ensure ongoing progress towards a more sustainable workplace.