

Sustainability Treasure Hunt At Home

Carry out your own Sustainability Treasure Hunt at home! Follow these tips to uncover energy saving doubloons during family bonding time.



Around the house

Explore your home together and look for the following:

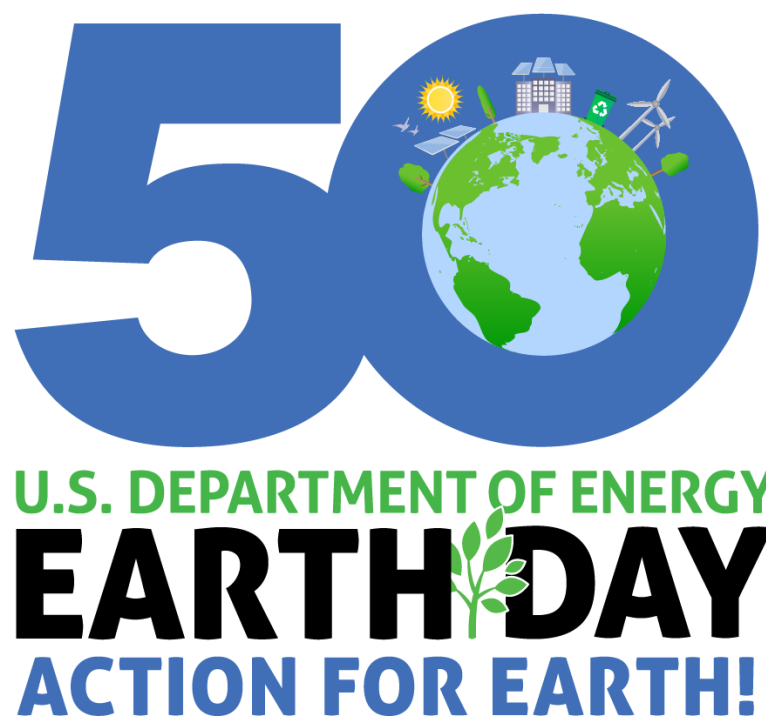
- **Are there lights, computers, or other appliances that have been left on and are not in use? Are there chargers plugged into the wall that are not in use?** Unplug them, turn them off or use power management to activate a low power mode when not in use. Many appliances or electronic devices draw "vampire loads," consuming electricity even when they're powered off.
- **Are any rooms too cold or too hot?** Check your temperature set points and make sure the thermostat is not set at a very high or low temperature.
- **Are any of your faucets leaking?** Make sure the handle is closed. If needed, use a wrench or replace.
- **Is air leaking from your windows or doors?** Feel for cold air with your hands when it's cold outside or hold a candle near your window or door when it's windy. If the flame moves horizontally, you have a leak. Consider weatherstripping or caulking.
- **Are you recycling plastic film?** Designate a space to collect plastic films and recycle them on your next trip to the grocery store (find collection location near you [here](#)).
- **Do you have green space?** Consider planting a garden together as a family.



Kitchen

Take a look at your refrigerator:

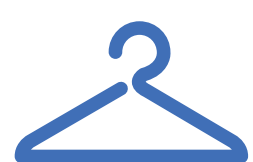
- **What is your fridge's temperature? How about your freezer?** Keep your fridge between 35° –38° F and your freezer at 0° F for efficiency.
- **Is your refrigerator door seal airtight?** Close the door over a piece of paper or dollar bill so half is inside and the other half is outside. If you can easily pull it out, you should adjust your latch or replace the seal.
- **Are there a few inches between the fridge and the wall?** Leave a few inches between the wall and the fridge so the condenser can get fresh air. See your owner's manual for the correct distance.
- **Remember to keep the door closed as much as possible!**



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Tips for general energy savings in the kitchen:

- **Scrape any food residue from your dishes instead of rinsing or hand washing before putting into the dishwasher.** You could save nearly 5,000 gallons a year!
- **Let dishes air dry in the dishwasher instead of using the heated dry setting.**
- **Keep the faucet on the cold position when using small amounts of water.**
Keeping it on the hot position draws hot water, even if it doesn't reach the faucet.
- **Cover pots and pans while you cook.**
Your food will cook faster and use less energy.
- **Use smaller appliances like a microwave oven, electric pressure cookers, microwave ovens, or convection ovens instead of your large stove or oven.**
These use less energy and will save on cooling costs in summer months.
- **Turn kitchen lights off when not in use.**
These are some of the most used lights in your house!



Laundry Room

Check your washer and dryer settings:

- **Is the default water temperature set to hot?**
Consider "warm" or "cold" settings to save half or more in energy use!
 - **Do you have a high speed or extended spin cycle for your washer?**
Adding this to your cycle will remove extra moisture, lowering your drying time.
 - **Does your utility have a time-of-day program?**
These programs offer lower energy costs at certain times of day. Contact your utility to learn more.
- **More tips for energy savings:**
 - Wash full loads of laundry or use a small load setting to lower water use.
 - Right size your dryer load: too big or too small will result in more energy use.
 - Air dry items when you can.
 - Switch loads when the dryer is warm to take advantage of heat for drying.
 - Use dryer balls to separate clothes for increased air flow and they will dry more quickly.
 - Keep your lint trap clean for safety and energy efficiency.

In addition to these tips, consider a home energy audit. Many states and utilities offer free audits with incentives toward energy conservation measures. Learn more about home energy audits [here](#).