

ECO LIFESTYLE PROJECT CASE STUDY: COKE CANS

BACKGROUND

Carla is a local resident who joined our Eco Residents scheme.

In discussing diets and food habits, we identified that Carla drank a lot of Coke, which she bought in multipacks of cans. Any individually-packaged servings have a lot of packaging. Fizzy drinks use a lot of CO₂ in their production.

SOLUTION

We discussed with Carla why she drank so many cans. She liked the convenience of being able to grab a drink, and she enjoyed the refreshment of it being chilled. We discussed various options she could try. For example, buying Coke in large bottles might be more efficient in terms of packaging and cost, but Carla felt the lack of portioning might cause difficulties and she would end up drinking more, negating the benefits.

After talking through various options, we settled on making up squash to keep in the fridge. By making up several individual bottles at a time, Carla retained the convenience of easy-to-grab drinks. By keeping them in the fridge, she still has the refreshment of the chilled drink. Carla suggested she could reuse bottles she already had, so no initial outlay or additional plastic was needed.

OUTCOME

Carla found that the switch was easier to make than she expected and quickly got into the habit of making up a few bottles of squash ready to drink.

Before the swap, Carla was drinking an average of three cans a day. After the swap, she used around a bottle of squash a week. According to the My Emissions food carbon footprint calculatorⁱ, a can of soft drink has a footprint of 205g CO₂e. Enough fruit cordial for a medium glass has a footprint of 96g CO₂e. The tap water to make the cordial has a very tiny carbon footprint of around 0.2gCO₂e per pint.ⁱⁱ Over a week, this works out to be 4.3kg CO₂e for the cans or 2kg CO₂e for the squash, a saving of 2.3kg CO₂e every week.

Carla has cut the carbon cost of her regular cold drinks by more than half. The monetary cost has also dropped by around $\frac{3}{4}$ ⁱⁱⁱ. As a bonus, she is also avoiding the health risks associated with fizzy drinks.

BENEFICIARY QUOTES

“Since stopping drinking cans of pop not only has it saved me money it's also helped with my weight. I feel healthier for it and not so bloated”

ⁱ <https://myemissions.green/food-carbon-footprint-calculator/>

ⁱⁱ *How Bad are Bananas?* by Mike Berners-Lee

ⁱⁱⁱ Based on £6 per week for cans in multipacks vs £1.50 per bottle of squash, prices taken from asda.com