



Purchasing Pup e-News



Styrofoam vs. Paper—The Coffee Cup Challenge

When it comes to keeping hot drinks hot and cold drinks cold, polystyrene (Styrofoam) usually wins over the paper cup. In addition to being a better insulator, foam also takes less energy and natural resources to manufacture.

But paper is not so easily defeated. Styrene, the main ingredient in polystyrene, can be harmful to human health. More research is needed to understand the effects of styrene on consumers. However, there are [studies](#) that indicate [low levels of styrene](#) leach into hot beverages and food microwaved in polystyrene to-go containers. A more critical and well-

documented issue is the health of workers who manufacture polystyrene products.

Workers exposed to styrene can experience eye irritation, fatigue, headaches, depression and other negative impacts on their central nervous system. By choosing alternatives to polystyrene you influence the market and help make worker safety a priority.

CHOOSE TO REUSE

The best alternative to polystyrene is reusable mugs, cups and food containers. They are safer for human health and better for the environment. Having mugs and kitchen items available for employees also saves money!

IN A PINCH PICK PAPER

You won't always be able to choose reusable cups and containers. The next best option for your office is to buy paper cups that can be recycled. Just pour out the left-over liquid – dirty paper can be recycled!

AVIDLY AVOID

Use Styrofoam as a last resort and sparingly. Don't microwave foods in a polystyrene to-go container.

**your choices
send a message**

Styrene takes thousands of years to break down in the environment and is rarely recyclable. Respect the needs of future generations who will be dealing with the trash we leave behind. Send out the message that your organization cares about protecting the environment and human health.

- ♥ **Stock your office kitchen or breakroom with dishes and containers that can be washed and re-used**
- ♥ **Provide paper cups or reusable mugs for meetings and functions**

