

Sick of Plastic Campaign FAQs

Who are we?

The Sick of Plastic campaign consists of consumers, citizens, and concerned members of the public who are sick of the rising amount of single-use plastics in Ireland. The campaign is facilitated by [VOICE Ireland](#) and [Friends of the Earth](#).

What do we want?

We want to see:

- A deposit and return scheme on plastic bottles and cans.
- A levy on single-use plastic items, like take-away cups.
- A ban on micro-plastics in cosmetics and care products.
- Supermarkets reduce the amount of plastic packaging they use.

Over 3,000 people have signed [our petition](#) on these four goals.

And just under 15,000 people have backed a petition for a deposit and return scheme, which was [presented to the Oireachtas Committee](#) on the Environment in January, as they considered a Bill to introduce one.

Now we are planning a National Day of Action on Plastic Packaging in Supermarkets.

What is the Day of Action on Supermarket Packaging?

On Saturday 21st April, the day before Earth Day, volunteers will be outside local supermarkets across Ireland, encouraging shoppers to leave their unwanted plastic packaging behind at the checkout. #SickOfPlastic #ShopAndDrop

These efforts will be targeted at the large supermarket chains, such as Supervalu, Tesco, Dunnes, Marks and Spencer, Lidl and Aldi.

The Day of Action is being coordinated from the Friends of the Earth office.

Why are we doing this?

We are sick of plastic. And sick of having more and more of it dumped on us by retailers who make us responsible for trying to recycle it.

We have reached a tipping point on public rejection of plastic packaging and waste. Shows such as Blue Planet II, EcoEye and The Story of Stuff, and campaigns including Sky News Ocean Rescue and TCD Plastic Free highlight and underscore the adverse impact plastic has on our natural environment, wildlife, and climate. The growth of citizen-led initiatives to reduce plastic show not only are we sick of plastic, we're going to do something about it. And we're demanding politicians and supermarkets do too.

What do we want supermarkets to do?

1. Offer more items without packaging, such as fruit and vegetables (without plastic trays, wrapping and nets) and fresh bread.
2. Ensure their own brand packaging is easily compostable or recyclable and uses less plastic.
3. Demand, through your own purchasing power, that brands you carry have easily compostable or recyclable packaging, and use less plastic.
4. Blaze a trail in Ireland by implementing a plastic free aisle, as has been done in the Netherlands.
5. Set up systems whereby consumers can buy items in bulk, to reduce packaging, like in the Dublin Food Coop.
6. Follow in the footsteps of Fallon and Byrne and set up a system whereby customers can use their own containers to buy dried goods, buying only what they need.

What do we want members of the public to do?

You can be a local organizer, a volunteer or just take part on the day.

On 21st April we are asking people to “Shop and Drop” - shop as normal in your local supermarket and then take off the excess plastic packaging at the checkout and leave it with the cashier.

We'll have postcards you can sign and hand in backing the 6 demands above.

We're also looking for local organizers and volunteers to help out on the day. Local organizers will promote the day locally and liaise with local supermarkets. Volunteers will hand out postcards and talk to shoppers outside supermarkets on the day.

[Fill out this form to get information on being a local organizer or volunteer.](#)

If you just want to be kept informed about taking part on the day, [sign up for updates by adding your name to the Sick Of Plastic petition.](#)

What is the problem with single-use plastics?

Anybody who buys groceries in supermarkets is regularly inundated with plastic packaging. Contrary to popular belief, we do not need this amount of plastic – only a few decades ago we got by without this material, a material that is produced primarily by the input of fossil fuels such as oil and gas.

A huge problem with this rise in plastic packaging is that much of this plastic is not even recyclable! The consumer is required to figure out where to dispose of such packaging and also has to pay for its disposal when it is not recyclable.

People are growing more and more concerned that plastic, which is used for such a short time, takes hundreds of years to decompose. This is causing terrible damage to the oceans, devastating wildlife, and sullyng our communities.

It is clear that the tide of plastic isn't ebbing – it's rising. We see large chain supermarkets as part of this problem. Our problem is not with the manager or the cashiers within the supermarket, rather it is with corporate management, manufacturers and processors who make product and packaging decisions and have control over purchasing decisions.

When will it take place?

The Day of Action will take place on Saturday the 21st of April.

Where will it take place?

The Day of Action will be a nation-wide campaign, taking place in local supermarkets across the country. The supermarkets we hope to reach include Supervalu, Tesco, Dunnes, Marks and Spencer, Lidl, and Aldi.

What else is the Campaign doing?

The Sick of Plastic campaign is supporting the Waste Reduction Bill which has had one positive vote in the Dail and is now being considered by the Oireachtas Committee on the Environment.

The Bill would introduce a deposit/refund scheme for drinks containers to motivate people to return their plastic bottles and aluminium cans to reclaim their deposit. Incentives like these will reduce the amount of litter strewn around our countryside, streams, and beaches.

It would also ban or tax disposable plastic plates, cups, and other tableware, (including one of the most notoriously inefficient single-use items, plastic coffee cups). Coffee shops and supermarkets would be encouraged to offer compostable packaging.

Additionally, we encourage shops to offer discounts to patrons who bring their own reusable containers and coffee cups - as part of [the Conscious Cup Campaign](#).

The campaign also supports a ban microplastics. Minister Denis Naughten has promised the Government will bring forward a Microplastics Bill to be passed by the Dail before the end of the year.

Do support the campaign and get updates, [sign the online petition](#).