

## Carbon Footprints and Sustainable Lifestyle

Sustainable lifestyle refers to a responsible use of global resources that protects and provides for the needs of future generations. Nearly everything we do has some impact on the environment and this impact is measured by calculating our carbon footprint - the number of tons of carbon emitted by a person, family, or business in the course of a year. Exploring this footprint is a good place to begin planning changes we can make to achieve a healthier environmental lifestyle.

Several websites provide carbon footprint calculators. Try one of the following: Nature Conservancy at [www.nature.org/initiatives/climatechange/calculator/](http://www.nature.org/initiatives/climatechange/calculator/) or the EPA at [www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind\\_calculator.html](http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/emissions/ind_calculator.html) .

Locally, Columbus has a website called [www.columbusgreenspot.org](http://www.columbusgreenspot.org). It gives specific suggestions, provides a little education, and asks for commitment to a greener lifestyle as well as providing a list of local businesses that are attempting to become greener. Your children might enjoy the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium website: [www.columbuszoo.org/education/habitat\\_hollow/green\\_reportcard.aspx](http://www.columbuszoo.org/education/habitat_hollow/green_reportcard.aspx).

We recognize that everyone has a different take on sustainability issues. You will look at some suggestions and say "I could do that, that would be easy." Others you would look at and say "No way!" Like other lifestyle changes such as exercise, every little change makes a difference and moves us toward health. One of us has made small changes in behavior this year that have resulted in a 22-23% decrease in electricity use as compared with last year. Admittedly because of increasing energy costs, the savings are only about \$15.00 a month., but as the changes seemed pretty small, the decrease in electricity use was impressive. (Of course, being without power for 4 or 5 days contributed some of that savings!)

Remember, don't try to do everything at once. Try a couple of things and stick with them. When you've accomplished that change, choose a couple more!