Eating in restaurants and buying take-out meals are regular routines for many families. With just a few changes, you can make eating out nearly as green as eating at home. These five easy eco-habits can help make your community a greener place.

**Walk, bike, carpool or take the bus**
- Changing the way you get to and from restaurants can be a major way to reduce pollution. You will save on gas costs at the same time! By using foot or pedal power, you can also burn some of the extra calories that come in restaurant meals that can be rather large. If you are meeting friends or family, organize a carpool or take the bus together.

**Support local farmers**
- North Carolina is rich in farming. Some farmers sell their food directly to restaurants. These local foods are fresher and better for the environment. They are not shipped very far or stored for very long. Buying foods locally is also good for the economy. It keeps dollars in the local communities. For more information, check out [http://greenleaf.uncg.edu/farm_restaurant.html](http://greenleaf.uncg.edu/farm_restaurant.html).

**Order just what you can eat**
- Experts guess that Americans waste as much as 25 percent of the food produced in this country. Super-sized restaurant meals are a major cause of wasted food that ends up in landfills. Large meals also add to our expanding waistlines. To cut down on waste (and your bill), order an appetizer for the main dish. Share items. Choose a child (or senior) meal whenever you can.

**Bring your own re-usable container**
- Think about how many Styrofoam, plastic and cardboard containers are thrown away every day. And most, after just one use. Switch to a reusable cup for coffee or water. You can help make a serious dent in how much gets thrown out. Bring your own clean container for leftovers. This will also help with waste. Ask local restaurants to use more recyclable or compostable containers.

**Get a doggie bag**
- Got scraps left on your plate? Feed any appropriate meat and bones to your dog or cat. Think about putting plant-based food scraps in your compost pile. Ask for the usual doggie bag. Or, bring a clean reusable bag from home. Remember that brown bag scraps (from school or work) can also be brought home for composting.