

What is a carbon footprint?

You can't control everything, but being conscious of your carbon footprint helps.

Carbon footprint

A carbon footprint is the amount of greenhouse gases produced by a particular human activity.

A carbon footprint is the amount of greenhouse gases—primarily carbon dioxide—released into the atmosphere by a particular human activity. A carbon footprint can be a broad measure or be applied to the actions of an individual, a family, an event, an organization, or even an entire nation. It is usually measured as tons of CO₂ emitted per year, a number that can be supplemented by tons of CO₂-equivalent gases, including methane, nitrous oxide, and other greenhouse gases.

How is a carbon footprint calculated?

When calculating a carbon footprint, a lot of factors are taken into consideration. For example, driving to the grocery store burns a certain amount of fuel, and fossil fuels are the primary sources of greenhouse gases. But that grocery store is powered by electricity, and its employees probably drove to work, so the store has its own carbon footprint. In addition, the products that the store sells were all shipped there, so that must also be factored into the total carbon footprint. Beyond that, the fruits, vegetables, and meats that the store sells were all grown or raised on farms, a process that produces methane, which has a greenhouse effect 25 times greater than CO₂. All of those elements must be combined to understand the full carbon footprint of a given activity.

Reference: <http://www.takepart.com/flashcards/what-is-a-carbon-footprint/index.html>

Carbon footprint activity

Use a calculator below to estimate **your personal** CO₂ Emissions. Share with your friends and discuss how you can reduce it.

<http://www.nature.org/greenliving/carboncalculator/>