

Spring Cleaning For Your Health!

Spring is just around the corner and that means one thing...time for spring cleaning! One area that you might want to start with is the kitchen. Keeping the kitchen clean is a great way to prevent getting sick from bacteria that may be hiding.

It's Time to Clean!

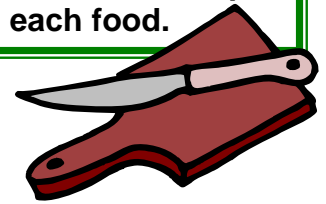
- Refrigerator/Freezer
 - Is it safe to eat? This is a question that you may have asked yourself before you ate something you found in the fridge. Bacteria can grow on some foods even in cold temperatures. Visit the Partnership for Food Safety Education's website at: <http://www.fightbac.org/content/view/186/97/> to find out how long you can store foods in the refrigerator and freezer. Be sure to throw away foods that are no longer safe to eat.
 - It is important to clean your fridge weekly of spills, bacteria, mold, and mildew. To do this, rub the shelves of your fridge with hot, soapy water and rinse with a damp cloth and dry with a clean towel.
- Pantry/Cupboard
 - Be sure to clean out your pantry or cupboards frequently and throw out items that are past the "use by" date on the package or can.
- Kitchen Sink Drain and Disposal
 - Don't forget about your kitchen sink drain and disposal. Pieces of food can get trapped which provides the perfect conditions for bacteria to grow. Try to clean it once or twice a week by simply pouring a solution of one teaspoon of chlorine bleach in one quart of water down the drain.
- Dishcloths and Towels
 - Remember to wash dishcloths and towels frequently in the washer and dry them in the dryer. Dishcloths and towels are great for bacteria growth when they are wet.

Always keep the fridge at 40 °F or below and the freezer at 0 °F or below.



- Sponges
 - It is important to replace kitchen sponges frequently. Bacteria and food particles can stay on the sponge even after it is rinsed out.
- Cutting Boards
 - If you can, use a separate cutting board for meats and produce. Be sure to clean it with hot, soapy water after cutting the food to get rid of the bacteria and before using it again.
- Countertops
 - Keep your countertops clean by wiping them with hot, soapy water after using them for making food, eating, or using it for something else.
- Floors
 - Pieces of food and spills can end up on your floor while cooking or eating. It is important to clean the floor often, especially if there are small children around.
- Disposal of Chemicals and Medications
 - While cleaning, be sure to look for old chemicals or medications that have expired or are no longer being used. Do not throw away these items in your trash. Instead, visit the Waste Commission of Scott County's Web site at www.wastecom.com to find out how to properly get rid of these items.

According to the 2004 Consumer Survey by the Partnership for Food Safety Education, only 67% of Americans reported that they "always" wash utensils, cutting boards, and countertops after preparing each food.



One Last Thing...

Now that you have your kitchen clean, don't forget about your hands! Always wash your hands with warm water and soap before and after preparing or handling, or eating food. Scrub your hands for at least twenty seconds and be sure to get between your fingers and underneath your fingernails.



*Spring
Cleaning*

Resource:

Partnership for Food Safety Education: www.fightbac.org
 Waste Commission of Scott County: www.wastecom.com

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