

A clean and safe kitchen

A clean kitchen will help prevent the spread of bacteria. Dangerous bacteria can lurk around countertops, surface areas of the kitchen, and on large and small appliances. Bacteria can be on a surface that appears to be clean. These bacteria can contaminate food and cause serious illness.

In the kitchen, there is a difference between cleaning and sanitizing. Cleaning involves soap and water, removes visible dirt, and removes most of the germs. Sanitizers, on the other hand, provide extra safety because they contain stronger solutions that destroy more disease-causing bacteria. Clean kitchen surfaces with soap and water. After cleaning and rinsing, sanitize the surface with a sanitizer.

A good sanitizer can be prepared by mixing 1 teaspoon of fresh unscented chlorine bleach per quart of water. A new solution should be prepared daily and can be placed in a spray bottle for easy use. Allow the surface to air dry after sanitizing. Wash hands after the surface is cleaned and sanitized.

Paper towels are ideal to use for cleaning because they can be used once and thrown away. This prevents bacteria from multiplying and being spread throughout the kitchen. If dishcloths are used, change and launder often. Sponges are not recommended for kitchen use because they have lots of nooks and crannies where germs can hide and spread from one surface to another. To prevent chemical contamination of food, never reuse cleaning product containers and keep chemicals away from foods.

Keeping appliances clean is important because they will last longer and will help prevent the spread of bacteria. Large appliances such as refrigerators, freezers, and ovens should be cleaned at least on a monthly basis since they are used often and spills can occur more frequently. Use soap and water to wash the refrigerator. Do not use abrasive cleanser or scouring pads because they can damage the surface. Greasy build up may require the use of a heavy-duty cleaner or grease cutter, and a soft cleaning pad.

Dishwashers are self-cleaning, but check to see if large particles of food are lodged in the strainer. Ovens are often self-cleaning and are helpful in making spills easier to clean. After the oven has cooled from the cleaning process, simply wipe away the ash residue that is left. Be sure to ventilate the kitchen when cleaning the oven in case it gives off fumes or smoke. Unplug small appliances before cleaning and NEVER immerse in water unless directions say it is permissible.

Cleaning the kitchen on a frequent basis makes the job easier and will make food preparation more enjoyable. Keep sanitizer solution freshly made and use to kill bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Be confident that your kitchen is clean!

Ainslie, Reviewed April 2020 by Elizabeth Andress