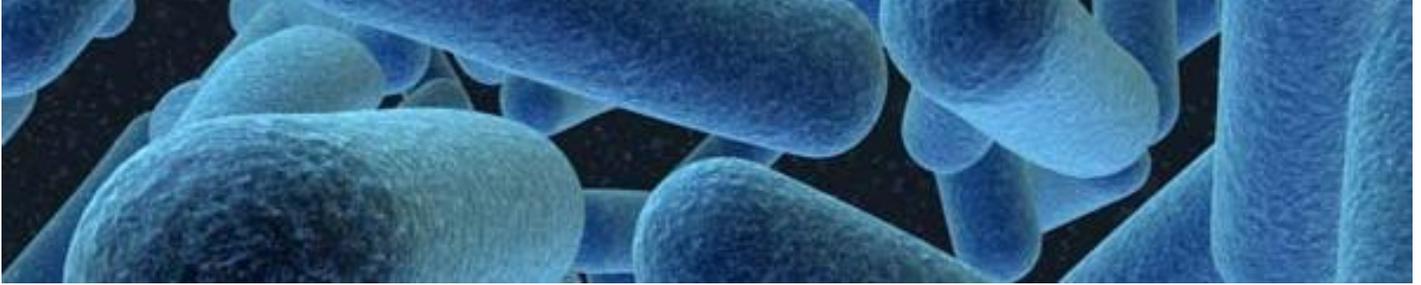




Cleaning Recommendations



In a germ study conducted by NSF International, 20 families swabbed 14 items in their kitchens. NSF's microbiologists analyzed the results, looking for *E.coli*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, mold and yeast.

The study revealed that the top five germ hot spots in the kitchen were the refrigerator vegetable and meat compartments, blender gaskets, can openers and rubber spatulas. Follow these tips to keep those items, as well as other kitchen items included in the study, clean and sanitized.

1. Refrigerator vegetable compartment

Remove the compartment/drawer from the refrigerator if possible. Use a clean sponge or soft cloth and wash the bin with a mild detergent mixed with warm water. Rinse with tap water and wipe dry with a clean towel. To help control odors, use warm water mixed with a baking soda solution (about 1-2 tablespoons of baking soda to 1 quart of water). Rinse and wipe dry. Clean monthly.

Always store produce separately: Keep washed and packaged produce separate from raw unwashed produce. Separate all produce from other foods such as raw meat, poultry or seafood. In the refrigerator, produce should always be stored on a separate shelf above all meat, poultry and seafood to avoid raw juices dripping onto the produce. Also keep them separate in your grocery cart, during food preparation and when using kitchen tools and appliances.

2. Refrigerator meat compartment

Remove the compartment/drawer from the refrigerator if possible. Use a clean sponge or soft cloth and wash the bin with a mild detergent mixed with warm water. Rinse with tap water and wipe dry with a clean towel. To help control odors, use warm water mixed with a baking soda solution (about 1-2 tablespoons of baking soda to 1 quart of water). Rinse and wipe dry. Clean monthly and whenever you see any spilled meat juices. In the refrigerator, store meat and seafood on a separate shelf below produce to avoid raw juices dripping onto the produce.

3. Blender gasket

Unplug the blender and remove the blender jar from the base. Completely disassemble the jar, removing the blade and gasket at the bottom. If dishwasher safe, place all pieces in the dishwasher after each use. If hand washing, wash the gasket, blade assembly, jar and lid thoroughly in hot soapy water, rinse and dry before re-assembling. Perform this cleaning procedure after each use.



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4. Can opener

If dishwasher safe, place the can opener in the dishwasher after each use. If hand washing, wash the can opener in hot soapy water, rinsing thoroughly with clean tap water before air drying. If hand washing, pay special attention to the area around the cutting blades to be sure all food residue is removed.

5. Rubber spatula

For two-piece spatulas, separate the handle from the spatula portion and, if dishwasher safe, place both sections in the dishwasher after each use. If hand washing, wash in hot soapy water, rinsing thoroughly with clean water. For one-piece spatulas, if dishwasher safe, place in the dishwasher after each use. Otherwise, hand wash thoroughly in hot soapy water, paying special attention to the area where the handle joins the spatula. Rinse thoroughly and dry.

6. Refrigerator water dispenser

Check your refrigerator manual for cleaning instructions. Many companies recommend using a solution of vinegar and water to clean the dispenser and ice maker. First turn off the water supply to the refrigerator and then loosen the screw connecting the water supply line to the refrigerator. Once disconnected, use a small funnel to pour 3-4 cups of distilled white vinegar into the tube. Wait five to ten minutes and then reconnect the water line. Turn the dispenser on to allow the vinegar solution to flow through the dispenser's system and spill out through the waterspout. To clean the waterspout, use a bottle or baby bottle nipple brush dipped in distilled white vinegar. Brush the inner side of the spout, then open the waterspout and allow it to run to clear of any dirt and excess vinegar solution. Close the lever when there are no traces of vinegar. Clean the waterspout weekly and the refrigerator water dispenser system once or twice a year.

7. Refrigerator ice dispenser

Turn the icemaker off, empty the ice from the ice bin and wash the bin with mild dish soap and warm water using a sponge or soft cloth. Wipe dry with a clean towel. If also cleaning the refrigerator's water dispensing system with vinegar, be sure to with throw away the first batch of ice, since it still might taste sour from the vinegar solution. Clean monthly.

8. Knife block

First remove any knives stored in the block. Turn the knife block upside down and shake lightly or use a can of compressed air to remove crumbs and other loose debris. Hand wash the knife block in hot soapy water, using a small brush (like a baby bottle nipple brush) to scrub out the knife slots. Rinse thoroughly with clean water. To sanitize, prepare a mixture of one gallon lukewarm tap water with 1 tablespoon of 5.25-percent household bleach. Either immerse the complete block in the water/bleach mixture or fill the knife slots. Allow the bleach/water mixture to sit in contact with the slots for one minute. Rinse the block and knife slots thoroughly with clean tap water and place the block upside down on a clean surface to dry. To avoid mold and bacterial buildup, wash knives thoroughly after each use and let them dry completely before placing them in the knife block. Wash and sanitize the knife block monthly if used frequently.



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9. Food storage container with rubber seal

If dishwasher safe, place both the container and the lid in the dishwasher and wash after each use. If hand washing, wash both the container and lid in hot soapy water, paying special attention to the area around the seal as well as any grooves where the cover attaches to the container. Rinse thoroughly and allow to air dry.