- House cleaning

Daily tasks to keep your kitchen clean

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The kitchen may be the heart of a home, but health experts notes it's also the dirtiest room in the house.



According to the National Sanitation Foundation, areas where food is stored and prepared have more fecal contamination and bacteria than other places in a home, like the bathroom. The NSF found more than 75 percent of dish sponges and rags tested positive for salmonella, E. coli and fecal matter. This is a much higher percentage than bathroom faucet handles, 9 percent of which were found to contain these harmful microorganisms.

Kitchens also are vulnerable to additional pathogens. Since food is found in kitchens, there may be higher rates of insect and animal pests, which come with their own health dangers. Pest droppings can be a serious health hazard that contaminate food sources and spread airborne pathogens that can trigger asthma and allergic reactions. Pest waste also can lead to gastrointestinal upset.

Kitchens require frequent cleaning. In fact, the following daily cleaning tasks can help keep people safe and healthy.

• Wash dishes. Hand wash all dishes or load them into the dishwasher promptly after use.

• Clean away clutter.

Remove unnecessary ingredients, tools and other items that do not need to be on countertops, as such items may be vulnerable to contamination.

• Address surfaces. Use an all-purpose cleaner to clean countertops and the stovetop. Clean up spills as they happen. Look for cleaners that offer microbial protection, but warm, soapy water also works.

• Clean frequent-use items. Cutting boards, the coffee maker, the kitchen sink, and areas of the refrigerator that come in contact with uncooked and unwashed food require frequent, thorough cleaning.

• Soak sponges. Sponges can collect germs.

Heating damp sponges in the microwave for a minute can kill bacteria, offers Healthline. Sponges also an be soaked in a quart of warm water with half a teaspoon of concentrated bleach. Others have said to run sponges through the dishwasher cycle to sanitize.

• Wipe down handles. Take time each day to wipe refrigerator handles, stove knobs, microwave handles, faucets, and light switches in the kitchen.

• Replace towels. Frequently switch out kitchen towels, and especially if they have come in contact with raw food. Use a separate towel for drying hands than you do for drying dishes.

• Clean the floor. Vacuum the kitchen floor each day, particularly after dinner. Routine mopping also ensures floors remain clean.

Keeping on top of kitchen cleaning each day can keep these popular areas safe for all.