

It's important to keep your kitchen clean, because germs can easily lurk on the surfaces you touch frequently. Maintaining a clean kitchen can help decrease your risk of contracting a foodborne illness. Foodborne illnesses can occur when consuming contaminated foods. Symptoms can include stomach upset, vomiting, nausea, or diarrhea.

All surfaces that have contact with food should be cleaned before and after preparing food. These surfaces should also be cleaned well between food types such as preparing raw chicken and then a salad, following these steps:

1. Remove food scraps.
2. Wash with hot soapy water.
3. Rinse well with water and air dry or dry with disposable towels, if possible. When using re-usable towels to dry, wash towels frequently in hot water cycle of washing machine.
4. Sanitize surfaces by using a commercial kitchen or all-purpose sanitizer spray or wipe. A homemade version of sanitizer can be used by mixing 1 tablespoon of liquid chlorine bleach with 1 gallon of water.

This is done to prevent cross-contamination. Cross-contamination is the transfer of harmful pathogens to food from other foods, surfaces, or utensils. Designating cutting boards can also reduce cross-contamination. For example, use one cutting board for raw meat and another for vegetables. Clean and sanitize knife between food items. Keep an eye on cutting boards and if they are getting worn with grooves from your knives, consider buying a new one. Those grooves can harbor bacteria because they are harder to clean.

Clean frequently touched areas such as:

- Cupboard knobs and handles
- Refrigerator, freezer, and stove knobs and handles
- Microwave buttons
- Soap dispensers
- Faucet handles



Tips on cleaning other items in your kitchen:

Microwave or oven	Clean when there are spills so they do not build up.
Refrigerator or freezer	Clean up spills as they occur. Deep clean every 3 months and remember to clean inside the bins and racks within the unit. Defrost ice build-up as needed.
Dish cloths and towels	Change daily and wash with hot water.
Cleaning pads or sponges	Clean daily in the dishwasher, by soaking in a sanitizer solution, or putting the wet sponge in the microwave for 1 minute.. Replace these often.

Sources and More Information:

1. www.usda.gov/media/blog/2019/08/27/clean-then-sanitize-one-two-punch-stop-foodborne-illness-kitchen
2. <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/news-events/events-meetings/food-safety-education-month-preventing-cross-contamination>
3. Food Safety for Boomers and Beyond – Kitchen Cleaning KSRE handout, https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/topics/doc/FoodSafety_KitchenCleaning3boomers.pdf

Original Fact Sheet: KSRE Food Safety for Boomers and Beyond, https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/topics/doc/FoodSafety_KitchenCleaning3boomers.pdf

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