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The Ultimate Home Detox Guide

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The 3 Dirtiest Items in Your Home and How to Clean Them

Nothing feels better than stepping into a fresh, clean home.

The beds are made, sofa is dusted, floors mopped and toilets scrubbed spotless. Yet, are we absolutely sure we've gotten rid of every last grime for the day?

There's a surprising number of dirty places in the house that we don't know about and they aren't exactly where you'd expect them to be, such as toilet bowls and trash cans. Microbiologists from NSF International, a global public health and safety organisation got down and dirty, revealing results from their studies that will astound you.

What ranks as the “germiest” place is, ironically, not the bathroom, but the kitchen.

It is alarming how we are unknowingly making ourselves and others sick by not paying proper attention to kitchen hygiene. To help you protect the health of everyone in the home, we have listed the hotspots you should be looking out for.





DIRTIEST ITEM #1

Kitchen Sponges

The handy tool that washes and keeps your dishes spotless is ironically the dirtiest item in the home. According to the NSF 2011 study, these sponges harbour a seriously high concentration of germs as they're constantly kept in a warm and moist environment. After three weeks of use, 70 percent of sponges started harbouring bacteria such as E. coli, salmonella, listeria, yeast and mold - pathogens that can cause food poisoning.

An excellent way to kill these germs is to place wet sponges in a microwave for two minutes. Doing this kills most viruses and parasites growing on the sponge. However, it is always safer to dispose and replace the sponge at least once every two weeks.



DIRTIEST ITEM #2

Kitchen Sink

It is the place where everything unclean goes to get cleaned. Although we use soap and water multiple times a day while using the sink, studies have shown that it can be dirtier than your toilet bowl post-flush.

Despite the fact, you can keep your sink germ-free by thoroughly scrubbing the entire surface with hot water and soap. Remember to sanitise the drain and faucet handle as well. Do this at least once or twice a week.



DIRTIEST ITEM #3

Refrigerator

The chiller is home to many kinds of harmful bacteria. It is mainly due to the fact that the compartments, and even door shelves, come into direct contact with food. More specifically, the vegetable and meat compartments; water and ice dispensers; as well as the food containers with the rubber seals. Make a habit of spring cleaning the fridge every week so you can toss out expired food items or long-forgotten takeaway dinners – hotbeds for bacteria to flourish. Do a thorough wipe with soap and water to remove any sticky residue that may get left behind, and wipe it dry with a microfiber cloth. Avoid chemical cleaners as you wouldn't want your food to be in contact with toxic fumes. It may take a little bit of time and effort, but the reward of a clean home and a healthy family makes every hassle worthwhile.



Ways to Keep your Fridge **Smelling Fresh**

A clean fridge translates to fresher groceries and even better health as it significantly lowers the chances for food contamination. Here are some useful tips for a clean and odour-free fridge.



1 | Watch the Temperature

Bad smells are often caused by food spoilage, which is why you should keep an eye on the temperature inside the fridge. A high temperature leads to food spoilage while a low temperature might cause energy wastage. Ideally, the temperature inside the fridge should be set at 0 to 4°C, and freezers at -18°C.

If your fridge or freezer isn't cold enough even after you've adjusted the temperature setting, it may indicate a larger problem. Call a professional to have your fridge checked for any leaks, problems with the drip pan or a malfunctioning defrost drain. If not attended to, these issues can raise fridge temperature and cause food to go bad prematurely.

2 | Utilise Humidity Controls

Keep your produce fresher for longer by placing it in the 'crisper' drawer - a special compartment that allows you to control its internal moisture level.

Bosch's fridge humidity drawers have two settings: farmers' produce like your fruits and leafy greens should be stored in the high-humidity drawer; while poultry and fish need to be kept in a low-moisture environment to prevent condensation and bacteria from growing.





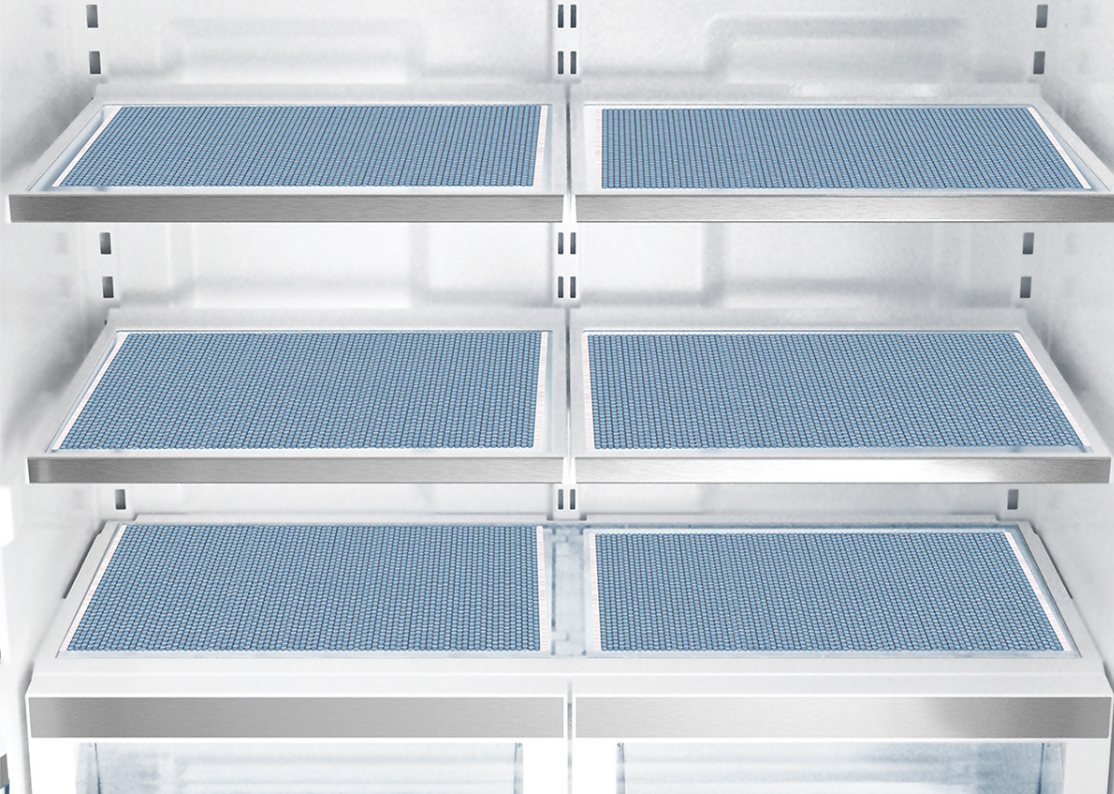
3 | Clean Fridge Shelves

Clean any 'movable' parts inside the fridge such as shelves and drawers. Bosch makes this process easier for you, as our fridges have EasyAccess glass shelves and drawers that can be removed without any fuss. All you need to do is to soak them in warm, soapy water for a few minutes before taking a kitchen sponge to remove any stains. Leave them to air-dry completely while you do a thorough wipe of the fridge.

4 | Keep your Fridge Organised

Create an "Eat me first" section. This works as a reminder to consume food items before their expiry dates. Be sure to keep them at eye level - so they are easy to spot - and store them in air-tight containers to keep them fresh!





5 | Deal with Spills Immediately

It's a good habit to wipe away spills and drips immediately, but you may not notice them until they have caked up and started to smell. A nifty and efficient way to keep your fridge clean is to line the shelves with fridge liners - they are perfect in absorbing accidental spills and are easy to dispose. When messes do occur, all you have to do is remove and wash the affected liner, rather than wipe down the entire fridge.

6 | Use Natural Deodorisers

To maintain year-long freshness, there are natural remedies you can use: for example, baking soda and fresh coffee grounds. These items are easily available and inexpensive, and they work well for neutralising bad smells. Simply put one of them on a plate and place it in the fridge. For best results - be sure to replace it once every week, or once a fortnight.

Alternatively, choose refrigerators with built-in technologies that combat odours. Bosch refrigerators come with AirFresh filters, which actively remove bacteria and neutralise odours so the air in your fridge stays clean and fresh all day.





The 5-Day Cleaning Regimen for a **Spotless Home**

Follow this checklist and streamline your cleaning process for a chore-free weekend! The secret is to focus on one space at a time and doing a little bit every day to prevent dirt and grime build up that takes even longer to clean.



Monday

Kitchen

Many busy professionals choose to prep and cook the entire week's meal on a Sunday. If you're too tired to deal with the aftermath, simply load your dishwasher and leave the deep-cleaning to Monday.

Start by cleaning up kitchen hobs and microwaves. Soak your sponge with soapy water to loosen all the dirt and wipe away any food debris or oily residue. Do ensure that the sponges used are non-abrasive and do not contain scouring pads. Then wipe dry with a microfiber cloth. Do the same for the counter tops. When handling the hobs, be cautious in making sure that water does not enter the burner openings.

Wash the sink with some dishwashing liquid, and don't forget to remove any food bits from the strainer so it stays clean. If you've been frying, finish up by mopping the floor to remove any greasiness.

Tuesday

Bathroom

Tackle this task, and you'll enjoy a sparkling bathroom for the rest of the week!

Start by putting some toilet cleaner into the toilet bowl, and let it sit. Meanwhile, clean the exterior of the toilet (tank, seat, base) with a cleaning solution. Then, use a toilet brush to clean the bowl and end by flushing.

When it comes to cleaning grout lines, the key is to have the right tool. For this, we recommend investing in a sturdy specialty grout brush. Alternatively, an old toothbrush can sometimes be substituted for this.

Pro Tip:

To reduce soap residues and mineral buildup on your glass shower door, be sure to wipe them with a squeegee after each use.





Wednesday

Laundry

It's the middle of the week, and your laundry basket has been piling up. Time to get your washing machine going!

Save time by doing your laundry in batches. While dirty clothes and items are being cleaned in your washing machine, multi-task by doing your weekly ironing. Once the washing and drying are complete, put away your clean clothes immediately to prevent any clutter.

Pro Tip:

Run a washing program which operates at 90°C and add in some bleach to keep your washing machine clean and free of odours.

Thursday

Bedroom

Lighten your mood by putting a little love into cleaning your bedroom. After all, your bedroom should be a calm oasis of peace.

Tidy your bedroom by picking up anything that doesn't belong here and put it away. Reorganise your night stand and replace your scented diffusers if they have run out. Do a quick sweep with your hand-held vacuum cleaner to remove any dust lingering on your furniture or floor.

Pro Tip:

If it's time to refresh your bed linens, put the soiled sheets aside for next week's laundry load.





Friday

Living Room

It's Friday and you're ready to unwind. Before you do, tackle these two tasks for a tidy and dust-free living room.

Do some light organising. Stack your magazines, plump up the cushions and go through the mailers that have been sitting on the table for the entire week.

Fire up your vacuum cleaner and let it do the heavy lifting - vacuum over your carpet and other 'high traffic' areas to eliminate pet dander, hair balls and other potential allergens.

Once again, if you're too tired from a long week, you can do this on Saturday morning. Don't beat yourself up for missing a day!

Pro Tip:

A light, flexible and convenient cleaning tool, the cordless vacuum cleaner makes cleaning quick and easy.

That's it; you're now ready to welcome guests during the weekend! Doing a little bit every day makes cleaning a lot less daunting. Get your family members involved, and save even more time!



5 Ways to Cleaner, Fresher Air at Home

Did you know that the air you breathe indoors can be up to five times worse than the air outdoors? On top of that, we spend an average of 90 percent of waking hours indoors.

If you don't want to settle for poor indoor air quality, or you suspect that you might be spending time in a home or office with inferior air quality that is causing you discomfort, you might want to take a look at these five things you can do to make the air in your home fresher and cleaner.



First, Filters

Using a vacuum cleaner with HEPA filters can help to keep the air at home cleaner without any extra effort. HEPA filters are an effective way to remove unwanted impurities from the air, and using a vacuum with a built-in HEPA filter helps you decontaminate the air while you clean the home. Now, isn't that convenient?

Second, Keep it Green

Consider placing air-purifying, low-maintenance houseplants around your home. Not only does this help keep the air cleaner – you come home to a relaxing, green and pretty view every day. Here are three common houseplants which can work their cleansing magic in your home.

1. Aloe vera - This easy-to-grow, sun-loving succulent helps clear formaldehyde and benzene, which can be a byproduct of chemical-based cleaners, paints and more. Place your pot of Aloe vera near a sunny window or just outside your home.
2. Chrysanthemum - These bright, happy flowers do more than add color to your home – they also help to filter out benzene, a chemical found in glue, paint, plastics and detergent.
3. Bamboo Palm - This small, apartment-friendly palm does well in shady indoor spaces and helps filter out benzene and formaldehyde that may be off-gassed from your furniture.



Third, Keep it Breezy

Thirdly, ventilate your house well to clear out dust and particles from small, dark corners. Leaving your doors open allows fresh air to come in and helps to release trapped and stale air. Keeping them open for at least 10 minutes a day can improve ventilation. On the other hand, keep closet or cupboard doors closed to prevent dust from settling on your clothes.



If there are smokers at home, keep in mind that secondhand smoke from cigarettes is a big indoor air pollutant which can cause asthma in small children. Encourage family members or guests not to smoke indoors, or run an air purifier to clear out any residual pollutants from cigarette smoke in your home.

Fourth, Maintain Your Air-Conditioner

Keeping your air-conditioner or dehumidifier well-maintained goes a long way in keeping the air indoors fresh and clean. Not keeping your air-conditioner in good shape can lead to mold or mildew forming in the filters of the unit, so remember to give them regular 'check-ups' too!

Lastly, Burn it Up

Finally, a natural and relaxing way of ionizing the air indoors is by using beeswax candles. Unlike paraffin candles, which release petroleum by-products into the air, beeswax candles burn cleanly and neutralise toxic compounds in the air, especially if they are placed in small or cramped rooms. All these small changes can add up to make a huge difference in the quality of the air you breathe in at home, at work or in any indoor space! Say hello to fresh, crisp air to kickstart your day!



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