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How to Keep the Refrigerator Clean

Daily

- Wipe up spills immediately, before they have a chance to dry.
- Ensure everything that goes into the refrigerator is immaculate. Always wipe the rims of jam jars, salad-dressing bottles, and ketchup containers before storing.
- Check for spoilage and throw out foods and beverages that are past their prime.
- Place anything likely to drip or leak, such as defrosting meat or cartons of berries, on a rimmed plate.

Weekly

- Wipe doors, including edges, and top of refrigerator with a cloth dampened with mild dishwashing liquid and water. Pay special attention to the areas around the handles, which can harbor sticky fingerprints.
- For a stainless-steel surface, use commercial stainless-steel spray and wipe in the direction of the grain.

Seasonal Deep Cleaning

- Turn off the power at the circuit breaker or fuse box.
- Put food in a cooler; remove glass shelves and crisper drawers and bring to room temperature so there's no danger of cracking when you wash them.
- Wipe the interior with a solution of 2 tablespoons baking soda and 1 quart hot water. Rinse with a damp cloth, and then dry with a clean towel. Do not use soap or detergent; they can leave behind fragrance, which will be absorbed by food. Do not use abrasive cleansers, ammonia, or bleach.
- To remove caked-on residue, rehydrate by liberally applying the baking soda solution mentioned above with a wet towel. Leave the door open, and let the residue soak in the solution for 10 minutes, or until it starts to crack or soften (reapply if necessary). Wipe the

stain away with a clean, damp towel. If the stain won't come off, repeat the process with a mildly abrasive, chlorine-free household cleanser such as Bon Ami; dilute 1 tablespoon cleanser in 1 pint hot water to avoid scratching plastic surfaces.

- Soak shelves and bins in a solution of 2 tablespoons baking soda for every quart of warm water. Do not wash in the dishwasher. Dry thoroughly before replacing.
- Clean the door seals, which can collect crumbs, with hot water and mild dishwashing liquid; dry thoroughly with a clean cloth. Check the seals periodically. An improper fit can cause cold loss and temperature fluctuations.
- Clean the drip pan or tray (also known as a defrost pan), which holds water from the continual process of defrosting -- if your refrigerator has one. You'll have to remove the base grill first to look for the pan; it often sits on a set of black condenser coils. Before pulling it out, check to see if there's liquid in it. If so, soak it up with paper towels (wear rubber gloves and a dust mask first in case the water is moldy). When the pan is dry, pull it out and examine it for signs of mold. Wash the pan with warm, soapy water; if it's moldy, follow with a 1-to-10 solution of bleach and water. Dry thoroughly and vacuum the area around the pan before replacing it. To clean a fixed drip pan, wrap an absorbent cloth around the head of a clean ceiling fan brush or a clean paint roller and secure the cloth with rubber bands. Dampen it with warm soapy water and clean the pan. Wipe with a clean cloth and let air-dry before replacing the grill.