

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for January 24, 2022
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about kitchen appliance maintenance, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

Maintenance tasks are not particularly enjoyable for most people. Now there are some people who find satisfaction in maintenance. They are the type to read the owner's manual. They invest time to clean or grease or protect. They take great pride in having older equipment or appliances that look like and work like new.

Have you heard that they don't make appliances like they used to? According to the U.S. Department of Energy, refrigerators now last an average of 12 years and clothes washers last about 11 years. The more often we must buy large and small appliances also means the more often we must dispose of them. More and more appliances are being recycled each year. However, the total amount going into landfills is still staggering at 2.1 million tons of major appliances and an additional 1.6 million tons of small appliances in 2018 alone.

I like efficiency and saving money. So, I'm becoming one of those people who enjoy making the things I have last as long as I can. Here are a few tips today to maximize a couple of our most used kitchen appliances.

When is the last time you pulled the refrigerator out from the wall? Condenser coils can either be found on the fridge exterior behind or at the base. Those coils are critical for releasing hot air from inside the fridge out into the kitchen. Dust and dirt on the coils prevents this from happening, causing the compressor to cycle more often than it should. Vacuum these coils with a brush attachment at least once a year. You can additionally use a long flexible brush made for cleaning dryer vents and condenser coils.

Consumer reports and home improvement guru, Bob Vila, suggest lubricating the clean rubber door gaskets with a thin layer of petroleum jelly. This will keep their elasticity to maintain a secure seal. It is best not to store things directly on top of your refrigerator. An empty top allows heat to escape better. And be certain that areas near the vents inside your fridge are not blocked by food or containers.

A small appliance that might not get the attention it deserves is the garbage disposal. Contrary to popular belief, garbage disposals do not have true blades, like in a blender. Instead, they have impellers that use centrifugal force to push food through a shredder ring as a flywheel spins. That is why fibrous foods and thin peels are not easily broken down with this process.

University of Wisconsin lists the following as a no go down the disposal: pasta, oatmeal, nuts, potato peels, corn husks, eggshells, coffee grounds, and bones. Sometimes this is to protect the actual unit from damage, but sometimes it is about the drains. Thankfully, many of these items can be added to your compost pile including the coffee grounds, vegetable peels, nuts, corn husks, and eggshells.

Every few weeks fill the garbage disposal with ice cubes and a cup of rock salt. Turn on cold water and run the disposal to scrape away any residue. Then with the disposal and water both turned off, pour ½ cup baking soda and 1 cup vinegar into the disposal. Allow it to foam for a minute or two. Turn the disposal on with running water and finish by adding small pieces of citrus peels to leave behind a fresh scent.

Take some time this week to give a little love to your underappreciated kitchen appliances.

And now let's take a look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension. I will be teaching a ServSafe® Person-in-Charge food safety certification training on Thursday, February 3 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Coshocton County Services Building. The program includes several hands-on activities and an Ohio Department of Health Person-in-Charge Certificate. Pre-registration is required by this Friday, January 28. You can find details about future programs related to financial wellness, food preservation, diabetes, and more at our website coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!