

Don't clean your refrigerator shelves this way: You're spreading bacteria!

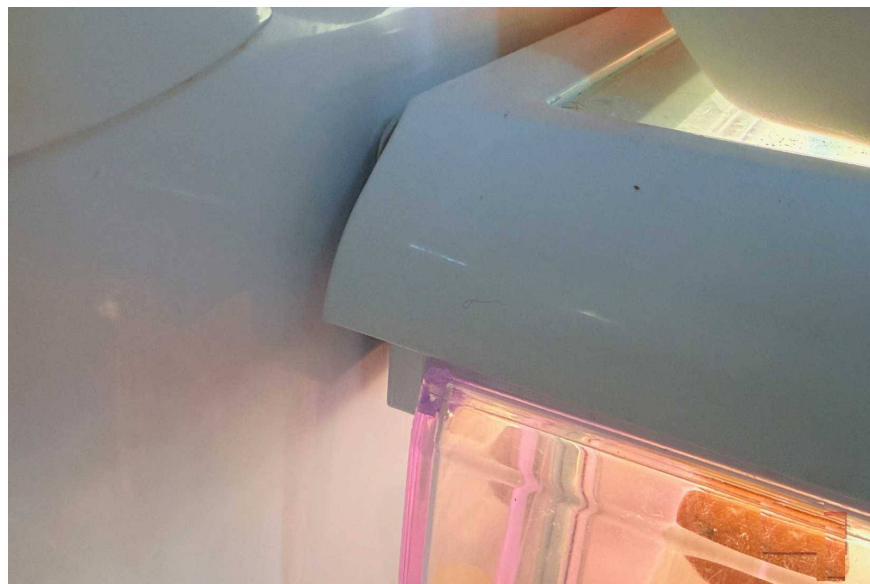
A better way is to clean out all the compartments, disassemble them completely and wash them with diluted soap or a mixture of water and vinegar.

Think about the last time you cleaned your fridge. Did you push a few bottles aside, wipe down the area, and call it a day? You're not alone; many people do. But here's the thing: Not only does this miss hidden stains, it can also make your food less safe to eat.

A better way is to clean out all the shelves, remove them completely and wash them with diluted soap or a mixture of water and vinegar. Once you have them out, take a moment to check the walls and corners of the refrigerator, where spills, crumbs and sticky residue often hide and are often forgotten, and clean those places too.

Why is this a bad idea?

Don't skip corners



While it may seem harmless to wipe down shelves while they're still in the fridge, it's actually not a good idea. There's a good chance that doing so will spread harmful bacteria. As you clean the interior surfaces, dirty water can run down, carrying bits of food or debris from the upper shelves to the drawers below. The runoff can contain bacteria like Salmonella or Listeria from raw meat, making your fridge an ideal place to contaminate rather than keep it clean.

It's important to note that cleaning the inside of your refrigerator means missing other areas. Refrigerator shelves and bins have nooks and crannies that can easily collect crumbs and sticky liquids. A regular sponge can't reach these tight spaces, so dirt and grime will continue to accumulate there over time. Eventually, the moisture and debris left behind can cause mold, unpleasant odors, or even spoil your produce. Food is expensive, so do your best to keep it fresh and avoid waste.

Some people also like to clean the inside of their refrigerators with commercial cleaning solutions. This is also a bad idea, as the residue can leak out if the compartment is not rinsed thoroughly. Doing so can contaminate your food.

Do you know: Which refrigerator brand is the best?

How to clean the refrigerator properly

Take the time to cover everything



When it's time to clean your refrigerator, take out the shelves and drawers first. Then, wash them with warm, soapy water, rinse, and let them dry before putting them back in the refrigerator. For the inside walls, use a simple vinegar and water mixture or a baking soda and water solution; both are effective at deodorizing and preventing bacteria growth. Vinegar shouldn't be used on all surfaces, but in this case, it's okay.

Some people wipe down the contents without removing the shelves if the refrigerator looks and smells nice. This can be effective for a quick clean between deep cleanings, but it shouldn't be the only thing you do.

However, bacteria can lurk in places you don't notice. Even a small drop from a meat or produce bag can spread bacteria that quietly accumulates in the cold air around food. Taking a few extra minutes to thoroughly clean will help prevent odors and keep food fresher longer.

Other things you can do

Keep the refrigerator clean inside and out

Cleaning the outside of your refrigerator is just as important as cleaning the inside.



For effective exterior cleaning, use a mild soap solution and warm water, applied with a clean, soft cloth or microfiber towel. Gently wipe all surfaces, including the door, handles and door seals. After cleaning, dry the surface thoroughly with a soft cloth or microfiber towel to avoid water spots.

For stainless steel refrigerators, use a stainless steel cleaner or a damp cloth moistened with mild soap and water, wiping in the direction of the wood grain to maintain the shine and avoid scratches. Avoid using abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, bleach, ammonia, vinegar-based cleaners, window sprays, or abrasive paper towels and napkins, as these may damage or dull the surface.

When cleaning the refrigerator door handle, you can use a mild household cleaner or appliance polish. Products like Mr. Clean Magic Eraser can be useful for removing stubborn stains. Regular exterior cleaning helps maintain the appearance of the appliance, prolongs its life, and keeps it looking fresh and clean.

If you want to be extra careful, always unplug the refrigerator before cleaning, especially when cleaning areas like the vents and coils on the back or bottom of the refrigerator.

During use, if you do not clean regularly, the refrigerator will have an unpleasant odor that affects other foods in the refrigerator. To fix this, you can refer to the article " 10 simple and effective ways to deodorize the refrigerator ".

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