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CARE OF THE REFRIGERATOR

This leaflet contains general care instructions for electric refrigerators. Not all refrigerators are alike. Refer to the use book that comes with your refrigerator for specific instructions.

- *A clean refrigerator will help keep your food from spoiling.
- *Clean refrigerators cool better and cost less to run.
- *When food keeps well, you save money.
- *Spoiled food can make you sick.

When to Clean and Defrost Your Refrigerator

- Wash the inside of the refrigerator just before you do the weekly food shopping. That will make it clean enough to store the new fresh food you buy.
- Many newer refrigerators are "frost free" and defrost automatically. If your refrigerator is one of these, you need not defrost. But, you still need to wash and clean the inside regularly.
- If your refrigerator does not defrost automatically, defrost it when frost on outside walls of the freezing section is about as thick as a thin slice of bread ($\frac{1}{4}$ inch.).

Getting Ready to Defrost

- Turn the refrigerator controls--the dial--to the word "Defrost" if it has that setting. Or turn the dial to "Off."
- Take out ice cube trays and frozen food.
 - *Put frozen food in a cardboard box. Wrap food in layers of newspapers. Cover with lots of newspapers. This keeps food frozen.
- To help speed up ice melting, put pans of hot water into the freezing section of the refrigerator. (Do not use the ice cube trays because hot water can cause the ice cubes to stick.) Let the ice melt. Do not scrape or punch with knife or sharp tool. You could hurt the freezing unit, and/or yourself.
- Put a pan under the freezing section to catch water. Some refrigerators have a drip pan. Empty the pan when it gets full.
- While the ice and frost are melting, take everything out of the refrigerator--all food, jars and cans. Set these things on a table or counter. Throw away spoiled food. If removable, take out the shelves and drawers for cleaning.

Cleaning Your Refrigerator

- To clean the inside of the refrigerator, use 2 tablespoons of baking soda mixed with one quart warm water. Soda water takes away bad food smells. (Do not use soap or detergent on the inside because it will leave a bad smell.)

- Wash any parts taken out of the refrigerator, with the baking soda and water.
- Replace the pans of hot water as water cools, to speed up melting. When the frost is melted in the freezing section, pour out the melted water from the tray under the freezer. Be sure all of the ice is off the freezing unit. Wash the freezing section and the tray underneath with the baking soda and water.
- Wash the inside of the refrigerator--the top, walls and bottom and any shelves you couldn't get out with the soda-water solution. Wring sponge or cloth very dry. Be sure to wash into all corners. Rub hard-to-clean spots with dry soda.
- Rinse with clear, warm water and wipe dry.
- Wipe the inside of the refrigerator door and the rubber strip around the edge of the door with the baking soda and water. (Use warm water only on molded plastic parts.) Rinse and dry. The rubber strip should be dried with a clean, dry, soft cloth so that there is no water on it.
- Replace shelves, drawers and other parts of the refrigerator.
- Empty the ice cube trays and wash them with warm sudsy water. Rinse them with clean warm water, then fill them with clean cold water. (Do not use hot water, it will cause the ice cubes to stick.) Put them back into the freezing section of the refrigerator.
- Wipe all the cans, jars, and bottles with a clean dry towel. Wipe off fresh fruits and vegetables. Put everything back into the refrigerator.
- Turn the control dial to a medium temperature setting or "ON."
- Wash the outside of the refrigerator with warm, soapy water and then rinse with clean warm water. Dry with a clean cloth.
- You may wax the outside 2 or 3 times a year with a white liquid wax. This makes it easier to clean and keeps it clean longer.

Special Tips on Keeping Your Refrigerator Clean

- When food is spilled in the refrigerator, wipe it up right away so it won't stain the finish and cause bad smells. Always use a clean sponge or cloth wrung out of clear water or soda water solution. Rinse clean with water.
- Keep all food covered.
- Open the door as few times as you can. Close it quickly after each use. When warm air gets inside the refrigerator, the motor must work harder. This costs you money with a high electric bill. This also makes work for you because you will need to defrost your refrigerator more often.
- Use a damp cloth to wipe dust off newly purchased cans and jars before you put them in the refrigerator. This helps keep the refrigerator clean.
- The refrigerator condenser also needs cleaning about once a year. The condenser may be on the back or at the bottom. Unplug the refrigerator, clean with a long-handled brush or the crevice tool from a vacuum cleaner.

The information in this leaflet is adapted from special circular 158, "How to Clean and Defrost Your Refrigerator." Cooperative Extension Programs, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.