

The most germ-ridden spot in your home is...

Objects in your home may not be as clean as they appear.

Germs that cause disease are found on many household items, according to research by NSF International, a global public health and safety organization. Scientists recently tested 30 surfaces in 22 homes to measure levels of yeast, mold, salmonella, E. coli and staph germs.

These 10 items were found to have the highest germ counts (ranked from least to most dirty):

10. Cutting boards

9. Stove knobs

8. Kitchen counters

7. Pet toys

6. Bathroom faucet handles

5. Coffee makers

4. Pet bowls

3. Toothbrush holders

2. Kitchen sinks

1. Dish sponges and dishcloths

Although most people think of bathrooms as the most germ-ridden spots in the house, findings indicated the kitchen is the biggest area of concern.

Here are tips for keeping your home clean:

- Use over-the-counter cleaning products for your kitchen and bathroom. Those that contain bleach are the most effective.
 - Wipe down sinks and drains each day.
 - Countertops, appliances and faucet handles should be wiped down two to three times a week.
 - Toilets, surprisingly, have been found to have lower bacteria counts. Clean these, as well as tubs and showers once a week.
- Fecal coliform bacteria from raw meat are often found on cutting boards, sponges and dishcloths.
 - Use separate cutting boards for meat and vegetables to avoid transferring germs. Raw vegetables have also been associated with food poisoning, which often happens when they come in contact with surfaces that have been used for raw meat.
 - Wash cutting boards in the dishwasher after each use. Or, soak for five minutes in a sink full of water with a little bleach. Rinse to clean after.
 - Wash kitchen sponges and dishcloths in the washing machine, or soak in bleach water and rinse clean after each use.
- Keep toothbrushes covered and away from the toilet. Storing in a cabinet is best.
- Follow the cleaning instructions included with your coffee maker.
- Thoroughly clean your pet's food and water bowls to avoid germs, bugs and mold that can make them sick. Wash the bowls at least once a week in the dishwasher, or preferably, clean them after every meal with hot water and dish soap.
- Soak hard and rubber pet toys in warm, soapy water and scrub with a sponge. Stuffed or plush pet toys can be cleaned in the dishwasher or washing machine.

Kate Eller - Health Enews, February 8, 2019

Wishing you joy and good health,
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