

Half of the UK's kitchens would fail a food hygiene inspection

Submitted by: Go Assist

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The fridge is the most overlooked area of any kitchen, but the degree to which we're neglecting them means almost half of us would struggle to pass a basic food hygiene inspection.

National study

Appliance repair company Go-Assist.co.uk (<https://go-assist.co.uk>) recently conducted a national fridge cleanliness study, involving 2,000 UK adults, and the findings were pretty grim.

According to the research, the average British fridge hasn't been properly cleaned for 87 days. That's more than three times longer than the recommended length of time between cleans.

Shockingly, almost one in ten Britons can't even remember the last time they cleaned their fridge.

Brighton is the UK's dirty fridge capital. 17% of the city's residents can't remember the last time they cleaned their fridge and among those who do remember, the average time since the last clean is 138 days. Five times longer than recommended.

Glasgow has the dirtiest fridges, with more residents than anywhere else in the UK leaving their fridge without a clean for more than a year.

Go-Assist.co.uk also looked at workplace fridges as part of the study and if you're thinking of taking yesterday's spaghetti bolognese into work today, you might want to think again.

Four in ten (38%) respondents who regularly kept their lunch in an office fridge said they had no idea when the fridge was last cleaned out.

Food hygiene and fridge basics

Equally, if not more alarming than fridge cleanliness, was the lack of understanding around how the appliances actually work. Just over ten percent of study participants wrongly believe that - because they're temperature controlled - fridges require no cleaning at all.

44 percent of Brits don't know what the correct temperature is for a fridge (hint, it's somewhere between 0 and 5 degrees, depending on what you've got in there) and 14 percent don't even know how to adjust the temperature levels on their own fridge.

Overall, a whopping 49 percent lack even the most basic fridge competence and are unable to check or regulate the temperature, meaning their kitchen would fail a basic food hygiene inspection.

The Food Standards Agency, the government body responsible for issuing food hygiene ratings for businesses, states that anyone selling food must be able to measure and adjust the air temperature of their fridge**.

Fridge maintenance

Cleaning your fridge regularly isn't just a food hygiene issue, it's important for the maintenance of your fridge. For example, if spilled food or drink settles around the seal, it can cause damage to the door, preventing it from opening and closing properly.

James Holden, spokesperson for Go-Assist.co.uk, believes misconceptions about how fridges actually work are behind the problem. He recommends incorporating your fridge cleaning schedule into your shopping schedule, to make things a little easier.

"According to our research, a worrying amount of people wrongly believe they don't need to regularly clean their fridge. But even in a cool environment, food can go off and bacteria can rapidly contaminate other items. It's really important for hygiene and maintenance reasons to regularly clean your fridge.

"We recommend doing a deep clean of your fridge every four weeks. To make life a little bit easier, schedule your next clean the day before you do your food shopping. This way, there will be fewer items to remove from the fridge before cleaning.

"Put any perishables in a cool box to keep them fresh, remove shelves and crisper drawers and use luke warm soapy water. It's also really important to unplug your fridge before cleaning it out."

If you think your fridge needs a little TLC, check out our guide to cleaning your fridge properly.
<https://go-assist.co.uk/blog/post/2017/07/28/how-to-clean-fridge-properly>

*Go-Assist surveyed a nationally representative sample of 2,000 UK adults. The poll was conducted by a regulated marketing research company who are members of the European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research and employ members of the Marketing Research Society.

**<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/multimedia/pdfs/publication/cleaneffective-sfbb-0513.pdf>

Survey breakdown is available on request. Please consider linking to Go-Assist.co.uk when publishing these results.

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