

NATIONAL ENERGY SAVINGS CAMPAIGN

Take Energy Efficiency into the Kitchen

It is easy to make a big difference by changing little habits. The kitchen – with all of its heating and cooling devices – offers a wealth of opportunities for cutting down on your energy use. The National Energy Efficiency campaign team found the following useful tips - tips that we can all take home as we strive to overcome our energy addiction as a nation.

Defrosting

It all starts with a bit of pre-planning. If you can think about what you want to cook for dinner the day before, you can take it out of the freezer and let it defrost in the fridge, rather than using an electrical device to thaw it out.

Microwaves

Believe it or not, the most powerful energy-saving gadget in your kitchen is your humble microwave. Microwaves use a lot of energy while in use, but cut down on your cooking time dramatically. Overall, microwaves use only about half as much energy as conventional stoves. Large meals and meat should still be cooked in a conventional oven.

Ovens

When you are cooking in your oven, there are a few steps you can take to minimise your cooking time. Try to avoid opening the oven door, as about 20% of the hot air escapes every time you do so. It is not necessary to preheat the oven unless you are baking, and you can cut down on cooking time even more by turning off the heat when the food is almost fully cooked. Make sure that air can circulate properly by keeping the oven racks clear and by trying not to use foil. And finally, make sure that the seal on the oven door is intact and closes tightly, so that heat cannot escape.

Stoves

The most energy-efficient way to boil water is in a kettle, but it is important to ensure that you only boil as much as you need. When using a stove, use pots and pans that completely cover the stove plate so that heat isn't lost to the air. If you put lids on your pots, you will be able to turn the temperature a bit lower, and can turn it off completely a few minutes before your food is done.

Top Tips

- Defrost food overnight.
- Use your microwave whenever possible.
- When cooking in the oven, don't preheat, and turn the heat off a few minutes before the food is ready.
- Make sure pots and pans completely cover the stove plate.
- Make sure your fridge is set to the correct temperature.
- Defrost your freezer regularly.

Cookware

The best way to cook stews and casseroles is in a pressure cooker, as this can halve both cooking time and energy use. When buying pots and pans, invest in sturdy metal with slightly concave bottoms (when they heat up, the metal expands and the bottom flattens out). Buy copper-bottomed pans, but use ceramic in the oven. Throw out cookware when it becomes warped – you can save about 50% in energy consumption by ensuring that the base of your pan is in full contact with the element.

Fridges

Refrigerators are one of the most energy-intensive appliances in the home. The best way to cut down on the amount of power it uses is to adjust its thermostat according to the season. To find out what the setting should be, place a thermostat in a jar of water and leave it in the fridge overnight. In the morning, it should read between 1 and 5 degrees Celsius. The fridge setting can usually be reduced in winter.

If your freezer is only half full, plug the gaps with empty milk bottles filled with water: when these freeze, they will help to keep the temperature down so the freezer does not need to do so much work. Make sure that your freezer is defrosted at least twice a year.

Ensure that the cold air remains inside the fridge by checking the seal regularly. Replace if torn, and clean if it becomes caked with dirt. Avoid placing your fridge near the stove, dishwasher, or in direct sunlight and make sure that air can circulate around it properly. One large refrigerator is cheaper to run than two small ones.

Using just enough electricity for what we need will make a major difference. So let's take the first step together; one meal at a time.

Check out some energy efficiency chef savvy publicity:

http://www.women24.com/Women24/Wellness/Green/Article/0,,1-4-1043_21872,00.html

The National Energy Efficiency
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