

GARBAGE DISPOSALS

The kitchen garbage disposal is not really as useful as you might assume and the distance from that unit to main sewer line can cause problems if items you dispose of stop half way there causing a blockage. If you use enough water to actually reach the main sewer line it is very water wasteful. While they may seem useful for getting rid of a variety of food scraps and waste that might otherwise create unpleasant smells in the kitchen, many foods can actually damage your disposal or render it useless. Environmentally - the eutrophic impact of sending your food waste down the disposal is more than three times larger than sending it to the landfill.

Do not put these things down your garbage disposal:



Never use hot water when grinding food waste. Hot water will cause grease to liquefy and accumulate, causing drains to clog. Don't turn off the motor or water until grinding is completed. When grinding is complete, turn off the garbage disposal first. Let water continue to run for at least 30 seconds, flushing out any remaining particles. Then turn off water.



Fibrous foods

Don't grind extremely fibrous material like corn husks, celery stalks, onion skins, lettuce, corn husks, carrots, potato peels and artichokes. Fibers from these can tangle and jam the garbage disposal motor and block drains.



Grease, fats and oils

Greasy foods will distribute a film over the blades, diminishing their effectiveness. Eventually, the grease will begin to decay, causing an unpleasant odor in the kitchen. Pouring grease into a garbage disposal can result in clogged drains when the grease solidifies.



Coffee Grounds

Coffee grounds down the garbage disposal build up an accumulation of goop and they accumulate in drains and pipes, causing clogs.



Egg shells

Some people claim that egg shells sharpen the blades of the unit, but this is not true. The shells' stringy membrane layers can wrap around the shredder ring, and the shell itself will be ground to a sand-like consistency capable of clogging pipes.

Pasta, rice, potatoes and beans

Even small particles of these foods will swell with water to form a paste-like substance, and eventually clog the trap.

Non-food items

Dropping a bottle cap or twist-tie - make sure you get it out before starting your disposal. If you break a glass in the sink the shards can be difficult to remove and can jam the disposal. We have had service calls that resulted in finding rubber bands, twist ties, cigarette butts, pull tabs, fabric, sponges and plant clippings in disposal units.

Bleach or drain cleaners

Don't use harsh chemicals like bleach or drain cleaners. They can damage blades and pipes. Borax is a natural sink cleaner and sanitizer that effectively works on odor-causing mold and mildew that accumulates in garbage disposals. A little baking soda followed by pouring a mix of white vinegar and water will create a bit of foam that can clean the disposal and remove odors.

The amount of water it takes to properly use a garbage disposal makes them very water wasteful.

Should We Dispose of Disposals?

http://www.slate.com/articles/health_and_science/the_green_lantern/2008/09/should_we_dispose_of_disposals.html

Dumping waste into the water system has environmental costs. There is evidence that the effluent that is pumped back into local water streams does affect their chemical composition and aquatic life. In extreme cases, the result can be something called eutrophication, which occurs when a higher concentration of nutrients results in algae blooms. According to [one Australian study](#), the eutrophic impact of **sending your food waste down the disposal is more than three times larger than sending it to the landfill**. You'll also be using a lot more water if you decide to go with the disposal—and you'll be indirectly responsible for the extraction of the metal needed to make the appliance.