



# The Refrigerator

Foods last longer and stay fresher in a freezer compartment that is defrosted frequently. Defrosting also saves energy and lowers other maintenance expenses.

## Ways to Avoid Frost

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- Keep all foods covered.
- Keep all water containers covered.
- Open the door as little as possible.

Defrost the freezer when the layer of ice/frost is a quarter of an inch thick.

## To Clean and Defrost the Refrigerator

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### Necessary Equipment:

- Bowls to wash and rinse
- Bowls with warm water
- Drip trays for water from melted ice/frost
- Sponge or towel to wash
- Towel to dry
- Baking soda
- Soap or detergent

### To Begin:

- Unplug the refrigerator.
- Remove the ice cube trays and frozen foods. Put those in a cardboard box and cover them with newspaper. Wrap the foods with paper. This will keep foods from thawing while they are outside the freezer.
- Throw away spoiled food.
- Remove the shelves and trays.

### To Defrost:

- Place a drip tray underneath the freezer to catch melted ice/frost. Most refrigerators have their own tray.
- Place a bowl of warm water in the freezer to speed up the defrosting process.
- Defrosting takes time. Never use any sharp or metal objects such as knives to remove the frost. This can seriously damage your refrigerator.
- Empty the drip tray when it is full.

## To Clean the Interior:

- Add two spoons of baking soda to a quarter cup of warm water and wash the interior of the refrigerator. Do not use soap; it may leave an odor.
- Wash the trays, slide-out shelf and shelves with baking soda-water.
- Rub the difficult stains with pure baking soda.
- Rinse the refrigerator with warm water and dry with a clean towel.
- Replace shelves and trays and other parts into the refrigerator.
- Rinse the ice cube trays with warm water. Do not use soap or boiling water with metallic ice trays. This will cause the ice to stick in the tray.

## To Clean the Exterior:

- Prepare a bowl with warm, mild, soapy water.
- Wash the rubber gasket around the door.
- Unplug the refrigerator.
- Wash the exterior with soapy water.
- Rinse with warm water and dry with a clean and soft cloth.
- Wax the exterior surface two or three times a year with white liquid wax. This makes cleaning easier.

## Finishing:

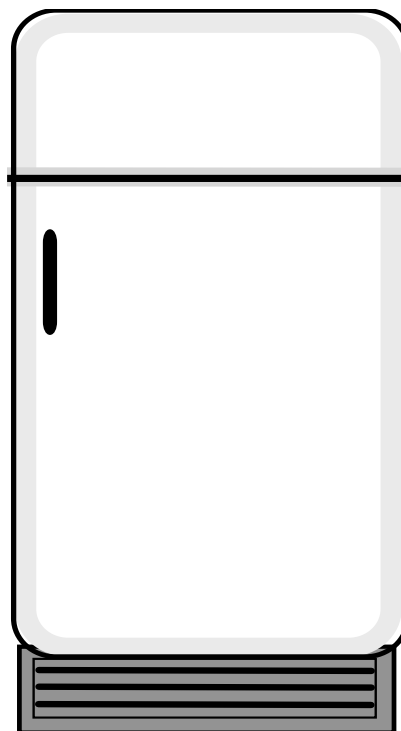
- Clean the jars and food containers. Wipe with a clean and dry towel.
- Put the food back in the refrigerator.
- Fill the ice cube trays with water and put them in the freezer.
- Plug the refrigerator into the wall receptacle.

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**ADVICE: To avoid damaging the finish of your refrigerator, do not use abrasive powders.**

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*This factsheet was originally developed by Virginia Peart, Associate Professor, Housing, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. The material has been adapted for use in Tennessee by Martha Keel, Associate Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences – Housing and Environmental Health.*



**Keep all cleaning products away from young children.**

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