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Pack It Up and Stuff It In

Three simple steps to maximizing your fridge's storage space

WACO, Texas (Dec. 14, 2009) – It's holiday party season, which means the food is flowing as freely as the merriment. Between an abundance of leftovers from last weekend's cocktail party and planning for this weekend's pot luck dinner, it's hard to find the time and space to handle it all.

This week, make a game plan to manage the old and prepare for the new (food, that is). Follow these three easy steps from Mr. Appliance® to maximize your refrigerator's organizational potential, leaving you with a sense of joy and peace.

- 1. Use what you've got.** Your fridge is designed to organize the food you always have on hand – juice, mustard, veggies, and soda. Keep juice and condiments in the door shelves organized by type (jams with jellies, ketchup with mustard, etc.). Likewise, keep vegetables in the crisper drawer, soda in the soda holder, etc. This will move most things to the outer edges of your fridge to clear space for leftovers and other food.
- 2. Categorize and separate.** Foods that are meant to be reheated or eaten cold – such as leftovers, yogurt or cream cheese – should be placed closest to the top. Plan out any party recipes ahead of time and do as much of the prep work as you can the week before. Cut and prepare ingredients and separate them into stackable containers. Stack ingredients for each recipe together (so everything is easy to find), keeping meats toward the bottom of the stack to avoid contaminating other ingredients with any dripping juices. Keep all raw prep ingredients on lower shelves so they don't get too chilly.
- 3. Label and maintain.** Keep a roll of masking tape and a pen in the kitchen near your food storage items. Label every container with masking tape – and date the leftovers so you know at a glance when it's time to throw them out. Make sure you place any new food items in their proper place according to your organizational strategy. All it takes is one or two carelessly placed containers to start the downward spiral towards a chaotic fridge.

“Beyond organizational problems, the biggest issue we see with an overloaded fridge is odor,” said Doug Rogers, president of Mr. Appliance Corp. “Customers will call us and ask why they have stinky ice. Usually it's because they forgot to put lids on their food containers, which can cause the walls of the fridge and even the ice in the freezer to take on those odors.”

Rogers suggests freshening things up with vanilla extract. Pour a little bit on a towel and wipe down the walls or place it in a bowl and leave it in the refrigerator.

About Mr. Appliance®:

Mr. Appliance is North America's leading appliance repair franchise system. Established in 1996, its franchises provide full-service residential and light commercial appliance repair. *Mr. Appliance* has more than 150 locations throughout the United States and Canada and is consistently ranked among the top home service franchises by Entrepreneur magazine and other industry experts. *Mr. Appliance* is a subsidiary of The Dwyer Group, Inc. For more information, visit www.mrappliance.com.

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