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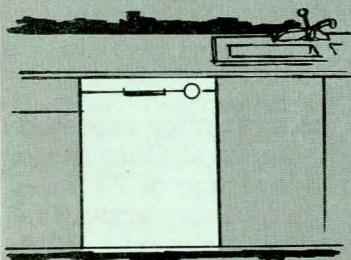
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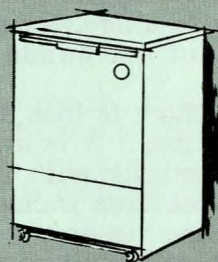
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Shopping for a Dishwasher



EXTENSION SERVICE

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

AND U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING

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SHOPPING FOR A DISHWASHER

By Mrs. Clara N. Leopold
Extension Home Management Specialist

Why a Dishwasher?

Dishwashing is the most often repeated task in the kitchen. Tests at Ohio State University showed an average of 73 minutes a day spent on dishwashing activities done by hand, including clean up. With a dishwasher, the average was only 35 minutes!

When it comes to sanitation, the mechanical dishwasher scores again. Hot water, a powerful spray, strong detergents and hot air drying are all sanitary factors. The use of an automatic dishwasher may hold family colds and other diseases in check because of the higher temperatures in the dishwasher 145 to 170°F (very hot).

An automatic dishwasher can also be a blessing to the homemaker who must conserve her energy. Anyone who must simplify homemaking tasks or who has arthritis or skin allergies may benefit by not having to put her hands in hot syndet water.

There is less dish breakage from less handling. It is also easier to get family cooperation with the dishes. Other useful features include warming plates and serving dishes and sanitizing baby bottles and washing jars for canning.

Which Dishwasher Shall It Be?

A plumbed-in unit is permanently located and installed. A mobile unit is rolled into position and connected each time it is used. Some mobile units can be converted to a plumbed-in unit.

A plumbed-in unit is inconspicuous and out of the way, it is always accessible, may be financed with the house, does not tie up the sink when in use, and is usually quieter than a mobile-portable unit. On the other hand there are some disadvantages: It may require expensive installation costs, and it becomes a permanent part of the house so you cannot take it with you.

A portable unit requires no special installation except adapters to fit water faucets, may cost less than a built-in, no extra expense when moving and you can take it with you, rolls around wherever needed and gives about four square feet of extra work space. As good, even identical features are available in portable as in built-in models. The portable's disadvantages are: It may be in the way when not in use; ties up sink during washing and rinsing cycles; may be more noisy than built-in.

Model Differences

Front-opening dishwashers have a pull-down door. Inside are two roll-out or revolving racks for loading dishes. Top may be used as a counter space and this type fits into a continuous counter. Front-loading dishwashers are usually easier for young children, handicapped and elderly people to use.

Top-loading dishwashers are of two types: One has a hinged swing-up top and the other has a drawer pull-out opening. With the hinged top more bending is required to place dishes and it is inconvenient to use top as a work counter. The drawer model pulls forward on nylon rollers and loads from the top. Although it requires stooping and reaching to load, it does not interfere with the use of the counter top under which it is located.

Washing and Rinsing

A dishwasher can do its best job only if it is fed sufficient supply of hot water, if it is loaded so that the detergent solution can reach all surfaces of everything in the machine, and if the right amount of a good detergent is used.

Good washing action is important. Ask to see how it works. Water should reach every part of the tub. There is no "best" way to get it there. More models now use variations of the pump than the impeller to get water action. The pump recirculates filtered water through distributing arms (various locations chosen by different manufacturers) to insure better washing and allow for random loading. The force of the water action may be measured in "gallons per minute."

Thorough rinsing depends on the volume of water circulated, temperature (at least 140° for detergent removal and 160° or more for sanitizing), filling or draining between wash and rinse, and number of rinses.

A built-in dispenser for rinse additive or conditioner (which lowers surface tension of water) aids in speed of drying and reduces mineral spotting, especially if water is over seven grains hard.

Interior

Usually porcelain enamel over steel.

Racks should be vinyl-coated to cushion the dishes.

Racks are coordinated with water distribution system. Models vary in rack spacings to accommodate large pans, tall glasses, small or delicate items. Best way is to try out with own dishes and utensils.

Silverware basket should be vinyl coated. Should be large enough to hold flatware for two and three meals.

A heating unit in the bottom insures hot water and good drying. Permits lower faucet temperatures for safer use.

If water is hard, a rinse agent dispenser is recommended to prevent spotting. Many rinse injectors hold enough liquid to last several weeks.

Capacity with spaces for large dishes and utensils. Flexibility of loading is important. Probably the square shaped tub provides greater dish capacity than a round tub of similar overall size.

NEMA (National Electrical Manufacturers Association) has set standards for number of place settings and serving pieces to be held and cleaned. A place setting includes one each: 10 1/4", 6", 4 3/4" diameter plates, cup, saucer, sauce dish, and 12 ounce 5 1/4" high glass; knife, two forks and two teaspoons. Serving pieces include a 10" x 14" platter, three bowls, creamer and four spoons, a fork and a ladle.

Controls-Cycles

Should be easy to reach, read and operate. Should be adjustable, making it possible to interrupt the cycle at any time with no loss of time or washing action.

With two washes instead of one, dishes will need less preparation for washing than with only one detergent wash. Preparation of dishes for dishwasher, in any case, is the same as for hand washing to avoid excessive amounts of foods gathering on strainer. A good filter is essential in preventing food from being redeposited on the dishes and baking hard during the drying cycle.

Safety Features

Motor overload protector is essential to prevent a burned out motor. Should also have a water overflow protector and a safety switch to stop flow of water when dishwasher door is opened. Gaskets are needed where the lid, door or drawer makes contact with the rest of the dishwasher in order to provide a tight seal during operation. Detergents and friction will deteriorate a gasket in time, therefore, it should be attached so that eventual replacement is neither too difficult nor costly.

The dishwasher should be industry approved. It should carry the UL (Underwriter's Label) and NEMA (National Electrical Manufacturers Association) seals, showing that it meets their specifications.

Permanently located units will have ground wire protection if properly installed. Most portables have the ground wire built into the hot water hose and care should be taken to see that it is grounded before the equipment is plugged into the electrical outlet.

The dishwasher should be operated on a separate electrical circuit.

Installation

According to research done at Washington State College, time and effort are saved when the dishwasher is placed to the left of the sink. It is also recommended that, if possible, the counter surface for stacking dishes be from 36 to 40 inches long. If installation is near a corner, 15 to 18 inches should be allowed beyond the dishwasher to permit standing at either side for loading and unloading.

Plumbing should be checked to see that it can carry the load, especially if a food

waste disposer is installed with the dishwasher. Septic tanks, if large enough in capacity, can handle the waste of either the dishwasher or disposer without harm.

For best results water pressure between 40 to 70 pounds per square inch is recommended.

WHATEVER YOUR CHOICE:

Know your house space, make sure of adequate water supply) pressure and temperature) and drain line, and electric wiring capacity.

Collect information from a variety of sources.

Buy a recognized brand.

Buy from a dealer you know and trust and who can service what he sells.

Send the warranty card to the manufacturer.

Read the instruction book; keep it handy; refer to it often -- learn to use for best performance.