

IN THIS NEWS LETTER,
WE WILL DISCUSS...

- Spring Pick Me Up
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- Tip of the Month

Spring Pick Me Up

Every spring I have the pleasure of celebrating Passover. One of the steps to celebrating Passover is removing all of the chumetz (this means all wheat, and other leavening substances like yeast) from your home. To do this you need to thoroughly clean out your kitchen cabinets, countertops, and all of the rooms of your house to get rid of the chumetz in preparation for Passover. This is a great excuse to do spring cleaning! Below is the kitchen cleaning and organizing checklist I use for this time of year (minus the Passover guidelines). It will also help you have a more organized kitchen this spring.

- **Organize Dry Goods:** Take out all of the food stuffs from your cabinets and/or pantry and wipe down all surfaces. Remove any expired food or anything you no longer need. Remember that canned goods are always welcome at food banks!
<http://tinyurl.com/bhkaoz>



- **Assess Your Pots and Pans:**

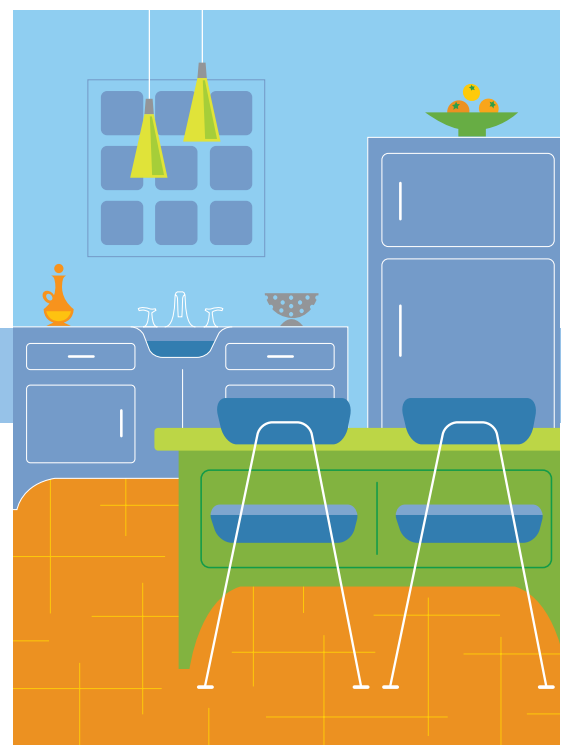
Remove all of your pots and pans and wipe out the cabinets. Donate any pots or pans that you don't use. Do the same with your Tupperware and baking supplies.

- **Make Your Oven Sparkle:**

First use your oven's cleaning cycle, then –when it's thoroughly cool– clean it by hand with oven cleaner, such as "Easy Off". For the gas stove take off all of the grates (what covers the gas burner bowls) and soak them. Remove and soak the broiler pans. Wipe down the range top.

- **The Refrigerator:** Clean out the fridge and remove any expired items. Most parts of the refrigerator can go into the top rack of the dishwasher. Replace the old baking soda box with a new one. Be sure to write the date on it, so it can be replaced in three months time.

- **Defrost The Freezer:** Be sure to have a cooler ready and waiting for all of your frozen food. Toss anything that looks freezer burnt. After the freezer has defrosted wipe it out with a soapy sponge.



- **Clean Out The Drawers:** Toss anything you no longer need from your kitchen drawers. Wipe them out and put back everything you're keeping. If your drawers tend to be on the disorganized side, I suggest you purchase drawer organizers:
<http://tinyurl.com/cwq5ce>

- **The Countertops:** Clear away the clutter that has accumulated, such as the mail, and other paper work. Wipe down the counters. You may find that you have an appliance (or more than one) that you don't use –such as a bread maker or a Panini grill– that is taking up an exorbitant amount of space. If you haven't used in the last 6-12 months, you probably won't, so give it away or donate it!

Just use this list and you will be on your way to a freshly spring cleaned home.



Keeping up With Your Kid's Stuff

If you have more than one child, you're likely a big fan of hand-me-downs and hanging onto your children's toys and clothes. A great way to stay on top of the potential clutter is by systematically sorting and containing the clothing and toys. Below are some examples.

Large Plastic Toys – Large-scale toys are the trickiest to organize because they are so darn big! One way to keep them corralled and clean is to put them in the large black garbage bags- try the jumbo lawn clippings bags. Just be sure to label them so they don't accidentally get thrown out! Place them in your attic or the basement. Very large toys, like big swings, often can be broken down into smaller parts and put into extra-large garbage bags. Just be sure to keep them out of areas that tend to get damp-such as garages- to ward off mold and rust. I also suggest that you make a file folder (paper or on the computer) that maps out where you are putting the items you're storing so that you don't forget what you have or where you put it.

Small Soft Toys – Plastic bins are great for these items. If they come as a set, such as Noah's Ark or Star Wars figures, place them in a zip lock bag first.

Kids' Books – Bankers' boxes are ideal for kids' books. These containers are a good size, don't get too heavy, and they have handles and stack nicely.

Clothing –Organize (launder first) your kids' clothes by size (and gender if applicable) and place them in plastic bins. Because infants grow so fast I suggest breaking down the sizes like this: newborn, 0-3 months, 3-6 months, 6-9 months, 9 months, 12 months, 12-18 months, and 24 months. You can continue up into the older years if you have room for more bins.

Feeding Supplies – Put all of your pumping supplies together in a bin and label it. Next, put all of your bottles together into another bin. I recommend putting the bottles' nipples in a separate Zip-Lock bag. If you use age appropriate nipples I recommend keeping them separate from each other in labeled Zip-Lock bags; this way they're ready to go for your next baby. Baby spoons and dishes can also be stored away in bins if you choose, or you can put them up in a high cabinet.

Baby Gear –Things like the Baby Bjorn or Ergo carrier will fit nicely into a bin until you are ready to use it again. There are also bouncy seats, swings (which I mentioned earlier), floor gyms, pack n' plays, and activity centers. Most can be stored away. Another option is to loan them out to a trusted friend with small children. It's possible that by the time they are done using them, you will need them again. If not you can sell them or donate them.

Here's a good choice for plastic bins:

<http://tinyurl.com/cl8zuc>

Tip of the month

When receiving a gift bought from an online store, or making a purchase online yourself, be sure to check the return policy so you can return it in the proper amount of time. If you are too busy to get to the post office or the UPS store, just call, or arrange a pick-up online, and they will come right to your door.

Take Note: If you need it picked up ASAP it will cost you.

Take Note: The cost of sending back your item, plus the restocking fee may end up being more than what the item was worth.

The Bottom Line: If you don't want the item you've been given, or ordered, get it back to the store immediately! Just think of all the other things you could use that money for, better yet, **SAVE IT!**

