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Good Maintenance Tips to Keep Your Refrigerator Running for Years

Your refrigerator is a hard working appliance, but how much time do you spend making sure it operates smoothly? Here are some maintenance tips to keep your fridge running in top condition.

Clean the Coils

Cleaning the condenser coils eliminates nearly three-quarters of service calls and can save you \$5 to \$10 a month in utility bills by allowing your fridge to run more efficiently. Experts recommend cleaning the coils at least twice a year, but more often if you have pets that shed, since fur can clog the coils more quickly.

Check Those Seals

The rubber seal, or gasket, that outlines your fridge and freezer doors is important for keeping it operating at key efficiency. The gasket works by sealing out warm air and can weaken over time. When it does, your fridge is working harder to keep food at the right temperature. In the long run, working overtime might shorten the refrigerator's lifespan.

Defrost, Defrost, Defrost

When frost accumulates to a thickness of about half an inch on the interior walls of the freezer, it's time to defrost. To do so, remove the food and unplug the fridge. Let the frost melt and when it has done so completely, plug it back in and wait for it to reach the correct temperature before putting the food back in.

Set it Right

Keeping your fridge at the right temperature will help it keep running right. Read your manufacturer's recommendations for specifications, but a good guideline is keeping the fridge at a temp between 37 and 40 degrees Fahrenheit and the freezer at 0 degrees.

Keep it Full

A well-stocked fridge won't only keep you and your family fueled, but also will help it run at peak efficiency. Thermal mass inside, even if that's just takeout containers and bottled water, helps absorb warm air that comes in when you open the door.

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"Pumpkin" Cheese Ball

Ingredients

- 16 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
- 1½ cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 3 tablespoons minced onion
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon minced jalapeño (*optional*)
- Nacho-flavored tortilla chips, crushed
- Blue corn tortilla chips for serving

Instructions

- 1) With a mixer, blend all ingredients except for nacho-flavored tortilla chips until well combined.
- 2) Scoop mixture onto plastic wrap and use the wrap to form into a pumpkin-shaped ball about 5-6 inches diameter. If desired, use chopsticks to score the sides of the ball to make it look like a real pumpkin.
- 3) Chill for at least 2 hours. When ready to serve, unwrap and roll in crushed nacho-flavored tortilla chips until coated. Garnish with a bell pepper stem on top.
- 4) Transfer to a serving plate and surround with blue corn tortilla chips for a tasty fall-themed appetizer!

Recipe courtesy of foodnetwork.com