

GARBAGE DISPOSALS

What You Should and Shouldn't Put In Your Garbage Disposal Unit - A garbage disposal unit makes the kitchen clean-up process a lot more convenient and is very environmentally responsible. Regular operation of the unit only costs about 50 cents per year and uses very little water, but it reduces the amount of food waste that ends up in landfills producing methane gas. Instead, after you operate the disposal unit, the food scraps are able to move through the sewer system and be more easily and efficiently treated at the water plant. Once it is recycled, your food scraps are reclaimed as clean water and fertilizer. In fact, the waste you put into the disposer is 70% water. Grinding it up returns it to its essence. However, there are limits to what a garbage disposal system can handle; it's not equipped to process everything you might want to put in it. The following is a list of things you should never put into your disposal unit.

Garbage Disposal Unit No-Nos

NON-FOOD ITEMS –When plates and utensils pile up, a fork or two can easily slip into your garbage disposal unit. Before you grind up anything, always clear out all the dishes in the sink, and check to make sure no non-food items have fallen inside.

GREASE – For the most part, garbage disposal systems can handle liquids. The problem with grease is that, when it cools down, it solidifies inside your drain and creates clogs. For that reason, you should avoid putting oil and fats in your disposal unit as well.

FIBROUS FOODS – Celery, asparagus, artichokes, chard, kale, lettuce, potato peelings, and onion skins should all be kept out of your garbage disposal unit. These items can easily entangle the blades causing it to jam.

PASTA AND RICE – When uncooked pasta and rice are exposed to water, they expand. You can imagine what will happen if you dump a sizeable amount into your garbage disposal unit—you'll have a backed-up drain in no time.

COFFEE GROUNDS – Coffee grounds are another disposer hazard because they tend to get caught in the drain trap and in the building pipes.

FRUIT PITS, SEEDS AND APPLE CORES – These items are far too solid for your garbage disposal unit to process. You will do better to toss them in the trash.

EGGSHELLS – The membrane on the inside of an eggshell can wrap around your garbage disposal unit's blades, so do not put eggshells into the appliance.

BONES – Fish bones are the exception but bones challenge even industrial strength disposal units. These are better to be collected with the trash.

PLEASE DO'S

COLD WATER – For it to function at its best, you should always run cold water through your garbage disposal unit for 20-30 seconds before and after you grind food stuffs. This ensures that all of the food will be flushed down the drain. You don't want a few decaying scraps sitting at the bottom of your disposal unit, stinking up your sink or in the pipes solidifying.

Here's a good rule of thumb: IF A BABY CAN EAT IT, THE GARBAGE DISPOSAL CAN HANDLE IT WITHOUT ANY PROBLEMS. Think baby food consistency and not chunks of food and nothing with grease.