

UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND
EXTENSION

Solutions in your community

CALVERT COUNTY OFFICE

30 Duke Street, Room 103

P. O. Box 486

Prince Frederick, MD 20678

410-535-3662 or 301-855-1150

SPONGE GRUNGE

Every kitchen has at some time or another been home to a sponge, that oh-so-versatile cleaning tool. It wipes up messes on countertops and absorbs liquid droplets quickly. Best of all, it's reusable.

However, that handy kitchen sponge can harbor more than moisture—things like foodborne pathogens, yeasts and molds.



USDA researchers report that a kitchen sponge can be effectively decontaminated by either microwaving the sponge or running it through a dishwasher with a drying cycle.

In a recent test, microwaving sponges killed 99.99999 percent of bacteria present on them, while dishwashing killed 99.9998 percent of bacteria.

To decontaminate your sponges:

- ✓ Heat moist sponges in a microwave for one minute
- OR
- ✓ Place sponges in a dishwasher operating with a drying cycle

Source: Agricultural Research Service, USDA, and Dr. Mark A. Kantor, Associate Professor and Extension Specialist, University of Maryland, Department of Nutrition and Food Science.

Equal Opportunity Programs

Funded by USDA in cooperation with the Maryland Department of Human Resources and the University of Maryland.

Revised April 2010

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