



EDITED BY RUBY BASHFORD

CARE OF THE REFRIGERATOR

The refrigerator is an absolute necessity in every home, and to purchase one without some thought as to its build and requirements will be found a very expensive proceeding. In the first place, do not buy a cheap one, and in the second place, do not buy a small one.

Both will be found to use up a large amount of ice, which will melt and run off, and the box be nothing but a dark, unventilated piece of furniture. A new refrigerator should stand for twenty-four hours after the ice chamber is filled before any article of food is put into it.

It is also important that there be little if any wood in the interior of the refrigerator. If it were not for the question of cost there is no doubt that, taken all in all, a tiled, porcelain-lined or enameled refrigerator would be the best. Such surfaces are smooth, easily kept clean, and do not absorb odors. A refrigerator should always be well ventilated, and so arranged that the cold air from the ice chamber should circulate freely in the food chambers.

When there are no separated and quarantined divisions, neither fish, cheese, cabbage, onions nor bananas should be kept in the general refrigerator. Their flavor will not only affect the other food, but will render the butter, milk and any gelatinous preparations absolutely unfit for use. With artificial ice care must be taken not to let fish come in contact with it, as the ammonia used in the freezing affects the fish. Meat should never be laid directly on the ice, natural or artificial, as it extracts all the good meat juices.

Half of the success in preserving eatables during the warm weather is in the care of placing them. The refrigerator should stand in a cool, well lighted place. A fact that is not often recognized, even by the careful housewife, is that the refrigerator should never be in a damp and airless place. It should always be placed where it can be drained easily. Dampness will warp the wood and by so doing make the tight closing of the doors impossible. This will admit the warm exterior air, melt the ice and defeat the purpose for which the refrigerator was built.

Proper ventilation is an absolute necessity. Another point to remember is that the doors should be opened as rarely as possible and shut tight as soon as possible. When a pan is used for the water from the refrigerator it should be so large that it cannot overflow before the time comes for emptying it. If the water from the waste pipe is not caught in a pan, it may be carried into the cellar, where the waste water can drip into a sink. The waste pipe should never be connected directly with the plumbing. In large cities the board of health regulations don't allow the outlet pipe to connect with the sewer, as formerly many of them did; but in some towns this is still allowed, though a distinct menace to health. Better the trouble of emptying the pan twice a day than run the risk of sewer gas getting into the refrigerator.

Keep the ice compartment full of ice. The more ice the greater the economy. There are many people who from a false idea of economy fail to get the best results from the use of ice and refrigerators. A common mistake is getting a small piece of ice every day or every other day, instead of filling the ice chamber two or three times a week. If you keep the box well filled, you will have the benefit of the maximum cooling capacity of your refrigerator; otherwise the temperature will never be very low and things will not keep as well. A small piece of ice cannot reduce the temperature sufficiently, and the result is that each new piece melts more rapidly and the food cannot be kept long. When the box is kept thoroughly chilled, the ice itself does not get a chance to melt. The ice compartment should never be opened unless absolutely necessary.

It will be found at the end of the season that the cost of ice and waste of food have been much greater than if the ice chamber had been kept well

filled. A small refrigerator, well stocked with ice, is more useful than a large one only half full. A way of economizing is to wrap the ice in paper or woolen cloths. This would be all right if the idea were to preserve the ice, but thus wrapped it cannot cool the refrigerator, and so fails in doing its legitimate work. Ice saving schemes are absurd, defeating the purpose of the refrigerator. It is the food that is to be kept instead of the ice. The household refrigerator is frequently expected to do impossibilities in caring for foods. It is a great labor saver when properly used, and may be depended upon the year around and not merely in summer.

Wash the ice and put it carefully in the box. If you have one that is porcelain lined, dropping the ice in may mean a break, and then the purchase of a new one. When there is any doubt of the purity of the ice it should not be used in the drinking water or in direct contact with foods themselves. Water may be cooled to a refreshing temperature by standing in bottles against the ice.

Do not think of covering the shelves with cloth or paper any more than you do the ice. There must be good circulation, with consequent melting of ice, to preserve the food therein. Put nothing edible directly on the ice. If it needs must go there see that it is in glass or porcelain.

There are people who are perfectly reckless in the way they waste ice and lower the temperature of the refrigerator. Such people place warm food in the refrigerator, and even on the ice, hoping to cool it more quickly, thus raising the temperature and producing a vapor which is bad for both the food and for the refrigerator. Nothing is worse than putting warm food in closed vessels or in refrigerators. As long as there is animal heat in meat, milk, poultry, etc., these foods should not be placed in a closed receptacle. That the article is surrounded by a low temperature will not insure it against decomposition. All foods, animal and vegetable, that have been cooked should be thoroughly cooled before being put away. The more quickly a substance is cooled the longer it will keep. Never mix warm food with cold. Much of the trouble in keeping cooked foods comes from putting them away while they are still warm.

No food should be kept in the refrigerator without ice and with the cover on or door closed. Chemicals of any kind must be kept out of the ice box. Absolute cleanliness is essential if the refrigerator is to be kept in condition during hot weather, and this can only be achieved by constant watchfulness on the part of the housewife. Twice a week clean out the refrigerator thoroughly, preferably on market mornings, when the shelves are comparatively empty. Let no crevice or corner be neglected. A particle of meat or of other food or a drop of milk resting concealed in some corner may taint the entire contents of the refrigerator. Have plenty of boiling water. Remove everything from the refrigerator. Take out the shelves and ice rack and wash them with soap and water.

Run a cloth or flexible rod down the waste pipe, being careful to remove any particle of dirt. It is desirable to have piping that can be removed and thoroughly cleaned. Besides washing the tubes with hot water and soap,

put them in scalding water for several minutes and then through a strong solution of sal soda.

If a drip pan is used it should be emptied twice a day and cleansed as thoroughly as the piping. Scour every part of the refrigerator with a clean scrubbing brush and soapy water. Wipe very dry. Treat the shelves in the same manner.

Perhaps it has not occurred to you that the compartment where the ice is stored is always accumulating the little leavings or dirt which may be imbedded within it; or dust may find its way in, or perhaps the queer growth caused by the presence of water will appear. There is no better breeding place for disease germs than this. The low temperature does not stop the growth of these enemies of mankind. They breed in banks of snow, nor are they easily destroyed by excessive heat. Germs of dangerous diseases are prolific breeders, and cleanliness, in order that they may find no place to breed, is the only method to be followed by which we may steer clear of dreaded maladies. The mossy growth that the dripping water produces is a great harbor for germs. Therefore clean the refrigerator regularly. A sun bath is a first class remedy for getting rid of any unpleasant smell. Air is essential, so leave the doors of the refrigerator open after this cleaning up for at least an hour. Be careful not to spill any food on the shelves. Should such an accident happen let the place be cleaned at once. Be careful what is put in, and remember that the ice chest is for ice, and should not be encumbered with all sorts of messes and left-overs, that should go in the lower part, if their place be in the refrigerator at all. Provide everything with covers, especially milk, butter and eggs, which quickly absorb impurities. Do not put butter in the refrigerator with the wrappings on.

Over ripe fruits and vegetables are a menace to the health if left in the refrigerator; nothing more rapidly taints other food than cantaloupes.

Charcoal is a great disinfectant, and a piece should be put in the food compartment and changed once a week. If much ice is used for the table and for other purposes, use a storage box for this extra ice.

Should ants get into the refrigerator, a saucer of tartar emetic mixed with sugar and water will drive them away. Another method is to scour the shelves with hot water and borax. Dry in the sun if the shelves are portable, then sprinkle thickly with dry borax, which is odorless and harmless and may be used freely. The idea of connecting a spring to a refrigerator door will be found very useful.

Do not make a culinary junk heap of your refrigerator and you will be saved many of the woes that inflict the neglectful housekeeper when heat works havoc with all food supplies. For people who have neither refrigerators, ice nor cellars, a well ventilated safe or box at the north part of the house is the next best thing. This should always stand in a current of air.

All the receptacles in which food is kept should, as far as possible, be made and kept germ and insect free. Glass, pottery and metallic wares are to be preferred to wood. Have as few grooves and joints as possible, as they harbor minute particles of food. Before receiving food the receptacles should

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