

Conserving Energy in Your Kitchen

Almost everything used in food preparation uses energy and produces heat, which requires cooling your home more during warmer seasons. Items like microwaves, stoves, ovens, toasters, mixers and food processors can consume many kilowatt-hours over their life span. To save money and energy, try out the tips below to create a more energy efficient kitchen.

Saving Energy with Your Microwave

- Your microwave oven is the fastest and lowest energy cost method to heat food in your kitchen. By increasing the use of your microwave as compared with comparable cooking on a stove or oven, you will save energy and money.
- Keep the inside surface clean to allow more efficient microwave cooking. You can often cook foods right in their serving dishes, thus saving time and reducing the amount of hot water needed for dishwashing.
- Use your microwave to defrost foods or to partially cook food prior to using the stove or oven. It saves time and energy.

Saving Energy with Your Oven

- Full-size ovens are not efficient when cooking small quantities of food. When cooking small-to medium-sized meals, it generally pays to use smaller microwave ovens, toaster ovens, or slow-cook crock-pots.
- If you have two ovens, use the smaller one whenever you can. It uses less energy to heat food.
- When using conventional ovens, keep your preheating time to a minimum. Unless you are baking pastries or breads, you may not need to preheat at all.
- Try to avoid opening the oven door a lot as you cook. Each time you open the door, a significant amount of heat escapes. As a result, food takes longer to cook and you waste energy. Instead, use your oven light and inspect through the oven door window.
- Foods cook more quickly and more efficiently in ovens when air can circulate freely. Do not lay foil on racks. If it is possible, stagger pans on upper and lower racks to improve airflow if you are baking more than one pan at a time.
- Cook double portions when using your oven, and refrigerate or freeze half for another meal. It does not take as much energy to reheat the food as it does to cook it, and it will save preparation time.
- Use glass or ceramic pans in ovens. You can turn down the temperature about 25 degrees and cook foods just as quickly.
- Use meat thermometers and timers to cook to exact temperatures. Not only will this increase your safety in preparing food; it also saves energy and brings out the best flavors.
- If you have a self-cleaning oven, use the feature just after you have cooked a meal. The oven will still be hot and the cleaning feature will require less time and energy.

Saving Energy on Your Stove

- For soups and stews that require long cooking periods, using a crock-pot will save energy.
- When using gas burners, make sure that you are getting a bluish flame. A yellow flame indicates that the gas may not be burning efficiently. If this is the case in your home, please call Vectren for assistance.
- Use the smallest pan possible when cooking. Smaller pans require less energy.
- Consider copper-bottom pans. These heat up faster than regular pans.
- Keep the burner pans (the metal pans under the burners that catch grease) clean and shiny so they will be more effective at reflecting heat up to the cookware. Blackened burner pans absorb a lot of heat, reducing burner efficiency.
- To reduce cooking times, defrost frozen foods in the refrigerator or microwave before cooking.
- With electric cook tops try to match the pan size to the element size. For example, a 6" pan on an 8" burner will waste over 40% of the heat produced by the burner.

If you would like additional energy savings tips, please see our energy efficiency section at www.vectren.com or contact us by e-mail at marketinginfo@vectren.com.