

Mayo Clinic Minute

Why the dirtiest thing in your kitchen might be the sponge you use to clean it

Video	Audio
	We use them to wipe and scrub. Then we rinse and repeat.
	But how clean is that sponge you're using to clean everything else in your kitchen?
PRITISH TOSH, M.D. INFECTIOUS DISEASES Mayo Clinic	"You take these wet sponges that are collecting food particles and things like that, so you have sort of a wet environment with good nutrients for bacteria to grow."
	Mayo Clinic infectious diseases specialist Dr. Pritish Tosh says he's heard every excuse for keeping an old sponge around, but he says there's really no way to get an old sponge clean.
	"So you really need some high temperatures to kill off bacteria, and high temperatures for a prolonged period of time. And often those temperatures are going to be beyond that which your hands will be able to tolerate. So if you are just washing the sponge under the sink – even if it's pretty warm – if you're able to tolerate those temperatures, it's probably not warm enough or it's probably not long enough."
	The only solution ...
	"Throw it out."
	He says most sponges are blue, green or yellow, which can hide noticeable signs of bacteria. So he says trust your nose.

	<p>“I don’t know what the right life span should be. Certainly, if it smells funny, get rid of it.”</p>
	<p>For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I’m Ian Roth.</p>