



Episode 6

Sanitize Your Kitchen Like a Food Boss

Good morning! Welcome to Toni Talks Humanity Matters.

I'm your host, Toni Julian, and today we're going to be talking about how to sanitize your kitchen like a food boss. I have a healthy lifestyle company and also a commercial kitchen where we make a healthy protein oatmeal and handcrafted meal bars.

We're a small business, but we are held to the same standards as a lot of large food businesses. So today we'll be listening in on actually how to apply those same sanitizing methods to your kitchen, to your home, so that you can stay germ-free and virus free in these days of the Coronavirus. This virus is an invisible enemy, and the best way to stay healthy is number one, by avoiding exposure, of course, and we've heard all about that in the news. What to do. That's a different topic.

But secondly, and what I want to talk about today, is ensuring that whatever we bring into our homes is not contaminated with the Coronavirus. I just want to make sure that the things that I personally do at home are as clean and as to the same standards as they are at our commercial kitchen.

Now, some people may think that it's overkill. I do not at all. As of the recording today, which is April 13, 2020 there are 550,000 diagnosed cases and 22,000 deaths, and that's just talking the United States. This pandemic, of course, is global and I don't believe we've even seen the peak of what we're going to be faced with.

I think we need to be extra, extra vigilant. I have in my food business what's called a PFR, and that has a Processed Food Registration, which is regulated by the state, the County, and the city level. So, there are lots of rules to follow and we need to follow what's called Good Manufacturing Practices, which has to do with no cross contamination, really good sanitation and good hygiene habits and lot coding accountability as far as where our ingredients come in and traceability as far as where they are sold to, whether it's to a wholesale manufacturer or whether it's to an individual.

Now we are in the Silicon Valley where we are right in the hub of one of these populated hotbeds of the virus. And I've just seen a, just a difference of opinions around how people are protecting themselves. Some people are being extra vigilant and other people are being completely oblivious, and that is just going to delay this. So, what I want to share are some things as far as how to sanitize your kitchen, how to sanitize your counters, your dishes and how to bring in items from the outside in. We want to make certain that even though we're being very vigilant, if we happen to be out for those necessary activities as far as buying groceries and critical doctor's appointments and those kinds of things, we want to make sure that we're not bringing things (viruses) into the household when we come in.

Number one is sanitizing dishes. And this is important because. If you think about it, it's a lot like, you know, this invisible virus, or it could be similar to an allergen where, say for example, someone's allergic to walnuts. We want to make sure as a food producer that we don't cross contaminate, or if someone has a gluten issue, you don't want to cross contaminate because even microscopic, little small amounts of these foods can make someone very, very sick.

And that is the same as with this, Coronavirus, COVID-19. So, number one is sanitizing dishes. Now, in a commercial kitchen, we have what is called a three-compartment sink, and it's just like it sounds, and you've probably seen them. On the left side it is for the dishwashing. So, you put in your dishes into hot soapy water. The second compartment is for rinsing, and the third compartment is for sanitizing. That is, disinfecting. I know that none of us have three compartments sinks at home. I sure don't. Nor do I want one. I do have a two-compartment sink, and some of you may have one compartment sinks, but this can work for absolutely whatever you happen to have at home.

So, the first thing is to really wash your dishes with hot, soapy water and then rinse them. And if you have two compartments, you can do this: wash everything, leave it in and then rinse it in that same sink, and then place it in the next compartment. This is the important part--sanitizing.

The formula is that you want to use chlorine bleach, and the reason for that is chlorine will kill bacteria and viruses. It is not ammonia or any other ingredient that people may often confuse with it. So, we want to fill up that sink with water. The actual formula is one and a half teaspoons of chlorine to one gallon of water.

So that's the ratio. Say you had two gallons of water, you would use three teaspoons of chlorine, and that is the right proportion. You don't want too much where there are a lot of chemicals and you're wasting it. And that's that point of diminishing returns. Once you do the washing and the rinsing, you went to immerse everything--your dishes--in the chlorine bath for about 60 seconds until it kills all the germs. Now, some people make the mistake of using a towel to dry, and I know I have done this and I've done it for a very long time until I realized that's not exactly sanitary. If it's a clean towel, yes. However, in a commercial kitchen, what we do is we have a drying rack, and so once the dishes come out of the sanitizing liquid, then it is actually set aside to dry.

And in the past, I've used a towel or sometimes there are those mats that are fabric used for drying, but the downside of that is they can actually, you can either cross contaminate with that or they can harbor molds or mildews or actual bacteria, so you could be cross contaminating your dishes. So, I don't use a towel any longer to sit it on.

One thing that you can do is if you have a drying rack, that works really great. And if you don't have one, one thing that I have in my household is a Baker's cooling rack, which is just a grid. It's, it's an open wire mesh and it has some little stands or some feet where it elevates itself off the counter so air can circulate.

So that is a perfect way. Just let everything air dry and you're good to go. All right, so from that, what you can do as well is how I sanitize the kitchen counters is I'll take an empty spray bottle and you may have one around maybe something that you've used before and just make sure it's nice and washed and cleaned out.

And what I will do is I'll take that spray bottle and I'll take the chlorinated water that is in that second compartment and I'll just fill up that bottle with it. And ideally, I would do that before you start dunking your dishes in it, but it is just a great way, something that you can use on your counters instead of using Clorox wipes or any of those other types of things.

Because this is just very cost effective. And what I like to do is when I use this spray on the counters, is use a microfiber towel. I make sure that it's very, very clean, and I have several of those and I never use that same towel twice. I will wash it in between.

Another source of contamination is our sponges. They get so disgusting so quickly, and before you know it, the sponge is absolutely filthy and harboring germs. So, I would either replace that frequently or you could also put it in your dishwasher and it could clean there as well as any scrub brushes that you have.

Another thing that we don't really think about is our cell phones, and when we're in our commercial kitchen, I have a rule where we just all leave our cell phones in another room. We do not touch them because if we think about it that those are very cross contaminated. And so, if I need to, I'll put my phone in my kitchen in a Ziploc bag, like a sandwich bag or, um, just a little snack baggie. And that way my phone is out. If I get an important call, I can see who it is. I can actually touch my phone--which I am actually touching the baggy and not touching the phone-- to keep my hands clean.

So, if I do that once or twice while I'm cooking or disinfecting, it is keeping my environment really clean and not cross-contaminated. In addition to that, of course, we want to make sure that we don't touch our faces and then the counter or the counters and then our faces.

Most of you have seen restaurant and possible where, uh, Robert Irvine tells the owner to wash his hands and as he watches him wash his hands, he's basically just kind of washing his palms and his fingers. But the ideal way to wash our hands is to wash between our fingers, the back of your hands, your wrists and up into the elbows. And even if you have a little scrub brush, get under your fingernails because that's another place where these little invisible germs can hide. And then we rinse for 30 seconds, and I would use warm to hot water. Again, back to the towel, we need to think like a surgeon! So, let's not pick up a dirty cross contaminated towel. Let's use a clean towel.

And I am trying to be a little greener and we're conscious of conservation and our trees and, and also not using the precious resources that we have and our accessibility to paper products. So, I do use clean towels for that, and then I do wash them.

I have separate hand towels in our bathrooms as well, because when people use the restrooms, we want to make sure that we're not all using the same towel. We have designated towels.

Another source of contamination is bringing items in from the outdoors. So, as we've learned from health experts, viruses can live on, or specifically the Coronavirus can live on plastics for three days and on metal surfaces for seven days. So, we need to think about everything that we touched; the door handles, a keyless entry system, our sunglasses, our keys, our wallets. Our charge cards, anything that we have touched, uh,

as we come in from outside and when it comes to the mail, I've been, as you probably have been ordering a lot online and avoiding going out. And even if we get a box delivered to our front door, I will either leave it somewhere outside and not touch it, or I'll bring it in with gloves and take the contents out of that box, recycle that box immediately.

And then I go back to disinfecting the surfaces that it has touched, including scissors or a knife, if I've used it to open the box. You know, certainly the countertops where it has touched. And if you can stay vigilant and doing those things, we will reduce our risks of infecting ourselves and staying as healthy as we can possibly be.

Thank you for listening. I hope all of this helps and that you and your family stay safe and healthy, and I hope that this gives you some food for thought. Be sure to subscribe and check out www.Tonijulian.com for more podcasts, blogs, and resources to keep you healthy and strong from my heart to yours. Until next time!

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