

News Column

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The Wonders of Baking Soda

Baking soda isn't just for baking. This multipurpose product is a great product to keep in your kitchen cupboard for a variety of reasons.

Found naturally in a crystalline form, this compound is then ground into a fine powder that many of us use when making our favorite sweet treats. But it has more uses than just that.

It can be used as a natural, non-abrasive cleaner when mixed with water. You can apply this paste-like mixture directly to surfaces you need to clean including ovens, stovetops, microwaves, sinks, tubs, tile, marble, and tarnished silverware. It can even help clean stubborn pots and pans. Simply add soda and hot water and let it soak for 15-30 minutes. For tarnished silverware, mix 3 parts soda to 1-part water and rub onto the surface with a clean cloth, rinse, and dry for a shiny finish.

Odors in refrigerators, trash cans, and closets can be eliminated as baking soda is a deodorizer. Leave an open box in the refrigerator or sprinkle the powder in the bottom of your trashcan or dishwasher to neutralize smelly garbage or dirty dishes waiting for a full load. It can also be used in stinky shoes or gym bags.

Similar to a cleaner, baking soda and water pastes can remove tricky stains from glassware, coffee cups, and plastic containers. For clothes, try adding ½ cup of baking soda to your regular amount of laundry detergent. Carpet stains can also be lifted by sprinkling on a thin layer of soda and then spraying with a 1-to-1 mixture of vinegar and water. Let it sit for an hour or until the surface dries before scrubbing the soda loose with a brush.

And lastly, baking soda can be used to put out small grease and electrical fires. When it is heated it releases carbon dioxide, which smothers the flames and extinguishes the fire. Many households have baking soda within reach as a first step in fighting kitchen fires.

Many of us will use baking soda as we make our favorite holiday treats this season, but keep in mind it can be used for more than just adding light and fluffy textures to our favorite desserts!

For more information about Family and Community Wellness, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension, contact the office at 620-583-7455, email me at celutz@ksu.edu or stop by the office. Visit the K-State Research and Extension - Greenwood County Facebook page and www.greenwood.k-state.edu for more up-to-date information on programming.