

Creative Living



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condo queries

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On the move

Family health tips during relocation

THE KITCHEN is often called the "heart of the home," traditionally being as a gathering place for families and friends. It's a special place that transforms daily to meet the disparate activities of a family. At one moment, the kitchen is a quiet spot where friends share dreams over warm coffee. Later in the day, the room is bustling with activity as family members recount the day's events while busily preparing the evening meal.

For most families, the kitchen also seconds as a work area where youngsters frantically complete their homework. Interestingly, studies indicate that a person's sense of smell is the sense most closely tied to memory; as a result, the kitchen frequently represents an emotional tie to the treasured aromas of one's past.

Of the estimated 47 million Americans who will move this year, many families will be temporarily thrown off balance when the security of their kitchen routine is disrupted. Thankfully, this stress is easily reduced if the family follows some practical guidelines when transplanting the "heart" of their home.

Tom Lindenberg, a professional home economist and director of the Bette Malone Relocation Service for United Van Lines Inc. offers tips for moving food products and kitchen appliances and for settling into a new home. These guidelines are helpful whether the family is using the services of a professional mover or renting a trailer and moving it.

- To guard against damage that can be caused by combustion, leakage or explosion, dispose of aerosol cans of all kinds: liquids, such as furniture polish or bleach in bottles that could leak, matches; food in glass jars. If it is absolutely essential to pack a liquid, such as a medical prescription, the lid or cap should be fastened tightly and taped. The container should then be placed in a tightly sealed plastic bag.

- Take only those items you are sure will travel well. Do not take anything perishable. Temperature extremes are harmful to canned goods. High temperatures increase the chance of spoilage and freezing temperatures may cause swelling, which, in turn, may rust the seams of a can. Storing canned goods in a cool, dry place is best, preferably with temperatures below 85 degrees.

- Be wary of badly dented or bulging cans since this may indicate the presence of botulism, a rare and often deadly food poisoning bacteria (Clostridium botulinum).

- Open boxes of dried or powdered foods such as rice, macaroni and cereals should be discarded since they may attract bugs. For a cross-town move, though, boxes may be sealed with tape. Small containers of condiments, bouillon cubes, gelatin, etc., should be placed together in a small box before packing in a large carton. Be sure to cover holes of shaker type containers and seal with tape.

- Since spices are expensive, you can tape those which still have a tight-fitting cap. However, if the bottles or cans do not have a cap, it is best to discard the spice.

- If you are moving to a part of the country troubled by pests and insects, it is wise to have your new home treated by a pest service — preferably before your arrival.

WHEN PREPARING KITCHEN appliances for a move, Lindenberg recommends thorough cleaning and drying of the products, especially the refrigerator, freezer and range. This is especially important if the appliances will be in storage for any length of time. The slightest bit of moisture in a warm, enclosed space is enough to cause the growth of mold and mildew with a resultant musty odor and stains difficult, if not impossible, to eradicate. Grease left on a range will turn rancid and gummy, catch dirt and dust, and leave spots on any items that touch it.

Cleaning instructions for appliances are included in the owner's use-and-care manual which generally accompanies new appliances. If

no manual is available, use a mild detergent solution or a good commercial "fresher" following the manufacturer's instruction for its use. Or use a solution of three tablespoons of baking soda dissolved in a quart of warm water to which one tablespoon of vinegar has been added. Do not use harsh abrasives that will scratch or mar porcelain finishes. A soft brush or vacuum cleaner will remove excess dust. Soft rags make excellent drying and polishing cloths.

In order to clean the kitchen range, remove the grids, grates, burner knobs, reflector pans, broiler pans, oven racks and other removable parts and clean them thoroughly. A degreaser (used according to the manufacturer's directions) and a stiff brush will do a good job of grease removal.

Steel wool and a wire brush are helpful in removing grease from the oven and broiler rack. While a wide variety of oven cleaners is available, an excessively greasy oven can be easily cleaned if one half-cup of ammonia in a sauce dish is placed in the closed oven overnight. Use a mild detergent or the baking soda-vinegar-water solution for the porcelain finish. Wipe out and dry the drawers and storage compartments, then replace the clean dry parts.

THE SAME CARE must be given to the cleaning of your refrigerator and freezer. According to Lindenberg, it's well worth a little extra time preparing your appliances for a move when you consider the monetary investment they represent. First, empty the appliance, then disconnect and defrost it. Once it has defrosted, remove all movable parts and wash. Wash the interior of the appliance thoroughly with the porcelain finish. Wipe out and dry the drawers and storage compartments, then replace the clean dry parts.

After cleaning thoroughly and drying, leave the door wide open for at least 24 hours — longer if possible — so the parts you can't reach will have a chance to dry. The invisible insulation holds moisture and dampness collects under the rubber gaskets on the doors. The open doors allow moisture to evaporate. The appliances will dry completely. Then replace the cleaned dry parts. Be sure the shelves are secure.

To keep the appliance fresh during a move, use a commercial freshener according to package direction or sprinkle the inside with baking soda. Upon arrival at destination, wash the freshener from the refrigerator or freezer with a damp cloth or sponge and the appliance will emerge clean, fresh and ready for use. When it is reconnected, let it cool before placing food inside. (If moved during cold weather, be sure to let your appliances warm up to room temperature before plugging them in. Plugging in a cold appliance could destroy it.)

When organizing for a move, decide which kitchen items will be needed immediately upon arrival at your destination, then carefully pack them into a moving box and mark this box "load last." That way, this "survival" box will be unloaded first.

ONCE YOUR FAMILY has arrived at its new home, efforts must be made so the kitchen can again assume its position as the heart of your home. To facilitate the family's emotional transition, Lindenberg recommends creating some familiar aromas by warming bread in the oven or making a batch of popcorn. These two comforting fragrances will subconsciously ease some of the anxiety of family members.

Don't overlook the importance of proper nutrition during the first few days of a move. While fast foods may be convenient, they are high in sodium and fats and can make cranky children even more irritable. Cut back on sugar, caffeine and greasy snacks, instead providing bowls of nuts, fruit and raw vegetables for your family. If you are not up to preparing food, see if the supermarket in your new neighborhood has a salad bar from which you

can make some sensible selections.

As another alternative to fast food, try a family restaurant or cafeteria that serves balanced meals with a minimum of fats and sugars. Careful meal planning can soothe jangled nerves and give your family members the energy they need to combat move-related stress.

The stress associated with relocation is also reduced through exercise. Lindenberg suggests the family take a break from household chores in the evening and walk through the new neighborhood. Not only is this an ideal means of relaxation, but the walk also fosters family communication.

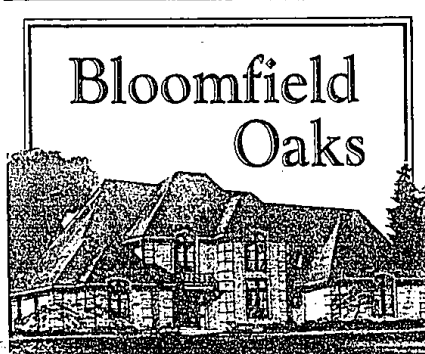
It's a great opportunity to discuss

the concerns of individual members, perhaps even solving potential problems or alleviating the fears that are a natural part of change. Besides keeping the lines of communication open, family walks also help everyone become acquainted with the new neighborhood and possibly even make some new friends.

United Van Lines' relocation service was created over 30 years ago to assist consumers with questions related to moving. It offers detailed information on more than 7,000 locations worldwide, booklets on a variety of moving-related topics and personal consultations with business executives concerned with the relocation of corporate personnel.

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As a rule, freezers should be empty when moved. Here's why: — Home freezers were not designed to be used as shipping containers. When put to such use, they can easily be damaged. — Frozen foods are highly perishable. There is no way to ensure that freezer temperature will remain at a safe level during transit since moving vans have no electric power to keep freezers running. — The use of dry ice as a refrigerant in a freezer during transit is impractical.



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READERS ASK:

By Andy Lang
special writer

Q. We are getting a squeak from the steps going from our first floor to the second. A careful examination shows an up and down movement when someone stands on the front tread where it goes out a bit over the riser. Will putting powdered graphite on that area stop the squeak?

A. Probably. But it will be only temporary. The loose tread should be fastened down by driving two or three nails into it near the edge. The nails should be hammered in at an angle so they form a V in the wood. Be sure the nails go into the top of the riser, but also be careful they do not miss the riser entirely. Screws also can be used for the repair, but they will have to be countersunk and the indentations plugged or filled. If the stairs are made of oak or similar hardwood, drill pilot holes for either the nails or the screws.

(Andy Lang is a special writer for Associated Press.)

On vacation

Organizing columnist Dorothy Lehmkuhl is on vacation. Her column will resume next week.

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