

Topic: Housing

Activity: Using a Garbage Disposal

Objective

- ✓ Participants will learn proper use of garbage disposals

Lesson Time

20 minutes

Materials

- ☐ Food images cut individually, 3-4 per group (sample included)
- ☐ Two pieces of flipchart paper, one with the word “yes,” the other “no”
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Optional: 1 avocado or peach; 1 onion, banana, or potato

Lesson

1. Read aloud or explain the following:

In the U.S., some sinks contain an appliance called a garbage disposal. Garbage disposals grind food waste so it can go down the drain instead of in trash cans. They are turned on and off by flipping a switch. If you use a garbage disposal, you should follow these rules:

- Be careful not to let any non-food items get inside (fingers, plastic, silverware)
- Always run cold water in the sink when it is on
- Only put small pieces of food waste in it (not large pieces or amounts of food)

In addition, there are some foods that should never be put down a garbage disposal in order to avoid clogging. These include:

- Rice (because it expands)
- Noodles (because they expand)
- Grease and fatty meat
- Bones
- Egg shells
- Tough pits and seeds (such as peach pits and avocado seeds)
- Tough peels (such as onion, potato, and banana peels)

Make sure to follow these rules so your sink does not get clogged. If you use your garbage disposal incorrectly, your landlord may charge you for repairs. Be sure to tell your landlord if you have any problems or questions.

Reflection Questions

2. Read the following, leading discussion and giving further explanation if needed:

- What is the purpose of a garbage disposal?
- If you use a garbage disposal, what rules should you follow?
- What can happen if you use a garbage disposal incorrectly?

Variations

3. Break participants into small groups. Distribute “Food Images” and read the following for groups to discuss:

- Which of your foods should not be put down the garbage disposal?

4. Bring the large group together. Ask each group to tape their slips of paper on either the “yes” or “no” flipchart paper, showing whether it is okay or not okay to put the item down the garbage disposal. Discuss as necessary.

- Use the avocado or peach to show participants the meaning of a pit or seed; use the onion, banana, or potato to show participants the meaning of a peel
- Facilitators can conduct the activity at participants’ homes using the foods in their kitchen to demonstrate garbage disposal use
- See <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resources/publications.htm>, “Housing Orientation Booklet,” for Mercy Housing’s *Welcome to Your New Home*. Page 13 offers useful illustrations and instructions. The booklet is available online in 12 different languages (English, Arabic, Amharic, Burmese, French, Hmong, Karen, Kiswahili, Nepali, Russian, Somali, and Spanish).