

Microwaving Sponges

Recent news articles have suggested that household cleaning sponges may be disinfected or sterilized using a microwave oven. Past practice had been to run sponges through an automatic dishwasher. The soaps and detergents, along with the hotter water would clean, deodorize and disinfect the sponges. With the recent release of studies regarding controlling household germs and bacteria, the microwave may do a better job of sanitizing sponges. However, many of the news releases neglected to specify that sponges must be saturated with water before placing in the microwave. If a household cleaning sponge is 'micro-waved' dry, the sponge may overheat, melt, smoke, or possibly ignite.

Sponges must be thoroughly saturated with water and placed in a microwave-safe bowl or dish. Water-soaked sponges should not be microwaved longer than 2 minutes. Use care when removing the sponge and container as they will be very hot. Allow the sponge and dish to cool for several minutes before handling the sponge. If a second sanitizing cycle is deemed necessary, allow the sponge and container to cool to room temperature before re-heating. This will prevent heat build-up.

Following these steps will prevent accidental fires or scald burns. Additional information and the news releases are linked below.

http://today.reuters.com/news/articlenews.aspx?type=scienceNews&storyID=2007-01-25T000823Z_01_N24478934_RTRUKOC_0_US-GERMS-SPONGES.xml

<http://news.ufl.edu/2007/01/22/zap-the-bugs/>



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