

Next Steps

A series of resource guides for neurodivergent youth



Housekeeping and Kitchen Safety

This guide includes helpful tips to keep up with household chores and stay safe while cooking.

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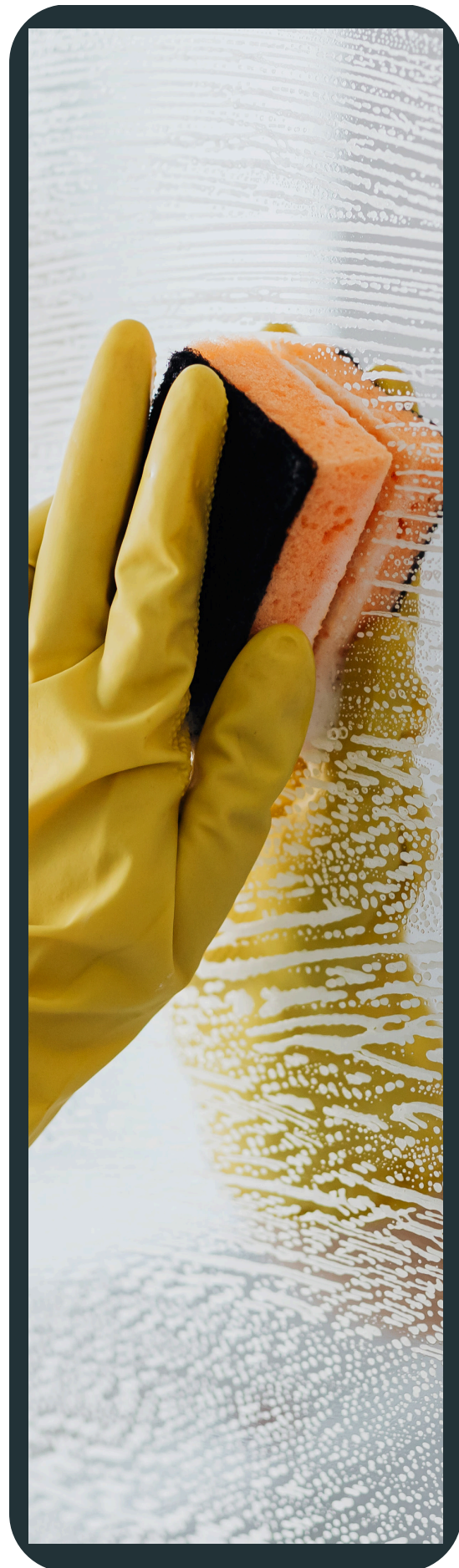
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Chores

In our daily lives, there are many small tasks and chores that can quickly pile up. Below, we provide a general overview of the tasks to complete when living independently. If you have roommates, these tasks can be shared among the other residents of your home to lighten the load. In the table below, we share the recommended frequency for chores, along with simple tips and alternatives for completing these tasks efficiently!

Chores or Common Tasks	Recommended Frequency	Tips	Suggested Materials	Simple Alternatives	Maintenance
Laundry (Clothing)	Weekly	- When you have a few undergarments left - When your basket is full - When you notice an odor on your clothes	- Detergent - Dryer sheets	"Pods" - Dryer balls	- Wipe the water off the edge of the washing machine to prevent mold, and leave the door open to dry the inside. - Empty the lint filter of your dryer
Laundry (Bedding)	1-2 weeks	- When you notice a smell - When your bedding looks or feels dirty			
Dishes	After you have eaten	- When your sink or dishwasher is full - Rinse/soak your dirty dishes right away for an easier clean-up later	- Dish soap - Sponge - Cloth - Dish brush - Drain filter in the sink	- Dishwashing pods - Brush with a soap dispenser 	- Empty the drain filter from the sink daily - Change your sponge (approximately every 2 weeks) - Throw away the excess food from your plate - Wipe the water off the edge of the dishwasher to prevent mold
Vacuuming or Sweeping	1-2 weeks	- When your socks/feet are dirty - When you see dust/dirt accumulation on your floors	- Broom and dustpan - Vacuum cleaner filter	- Washable dust mop - Roomba 	- Change/empty your vacuum filter when it is full - Shake your dust mop outside after each use - Wash your mop in the washing machine after each use

Chores or Common tasks	Recommended Frequency	Tips	Suggested Materials	Simple Alternatives	Maintenance
Mopping	1-2 weeks	When you observe an accumulation of stains on the floor	- Floor cleaner - Bucket - Mop	Spray mop (such as a Swiffer) 	- Rinse and dry your mop after each use - Replace the cleaning pad on your spray mop after each use
Dusting	1-2 weeks	When you notice dust on your furniture	- Microfiber cloth - Feather duster	- Disposable or washable duster - Duster with an extension arm	Change/discard the duster after each use
Bathroom Cleaning	Weekly	When you observe stains in/on the bowl or on surfaces	- Toilet cleaner - Toilet brush - Bathroom cleaner	- Bowl cleaning gel "Squeegee" brush for your shower	Rinse/wash your brush after each use
Emptying: (Garbage, Recycling Compost)	Weekly or according to the garbage collection schedule in your neighborhood	- When you notice a smell - When the bin is full	- Garbage bag - Compost bag - Garbage collection schedule	Set an alarm or reminder in your calendar for the day before garbage collection.	Rinse off liquids and empty excess food before placing an item in the recycling to prevent odors and keep your bins clean.

Please note that it is recommended to complete chores more frequently if you have furry pets, such as a dog or cat (e.g., sweeping, vacuuming, dusting, changing bedding).

Important information regarding toxic products: Many cleaning products contain toxic substances. It is therefore important to read the labels carefully before using each product. To help you understand the symbols on each label, please consult the [WHMIS Pictograms fact sheet](#). Please note, there are also [WHMIS courses](#) where you can watch videos on handling and storing your products. If you don't feel comfortable using toxic products, there are many natural products available.

Kitchen Safety

The kitchen is an essential room in your home for preparing meals. In addition to ensuring your kitchen is well-maintained, there are several risks associated with cooking. When you are in the kitchen, certain tools you may use can be dangerous, and it is important to be aware of their risks while using them with caution.

Getting ready to cook

- Before handling food or using kitchen tools, it is essential to wash your hands with soap and water to prevent the spread of bacteria. Please consult [Ottawa's Public Health Guide](#) for general handwashing guidelines. It may also be a good idea to keep a copy on your refrigerator or in another visible place in your kitchen.
- Wash all surfaces (such as countertops and cutting boards), and make sure that your tools (e.g., knives, spoons, etc.) are clean before you start using them.
- Wash fruits and vegetables under running water before cutting, cooking or eating them.
 - For more information, please consult this [Safe Handling Food Guide](#).



While Cooking

- Clean up spills immediately to prevent slippery floors or cross-contaminating raw ingredients.
- Handle and store sharp tools with caution. [Here is a resource](#) to guide you in handling and storing sharp tools with caution in the kitchen.
- Handle and consume food with care:
 - It is strongly advised against eating raw ingredients, such as cookie dough or cake batter, as they often contain raw eggs and flour.
 - Cut your meat, fish and chicken on separate cutting boards to avoid cross-contamination of these foods.
 - It is strongly recommended to wash your utensils immediately after handling raw meat.
 - It is important to check [the temperature of the meat](#) to make sure it is thoroughly cooked before serving.

- Be familiar with heat sources (coffee maker, microwave, cookware, etc.) and be careful when handling hot items in the kitchen. Here are some simple tips on what to do/not to do in the kitchen:

DO'S & DONT'S

Hot Substances & Heat Sources Safety



- Let food and liquid cool before consuming
- Pour hot liquids in the sink away from you
- Wear oven mitts when handling pots and pans
- Use a splatter screen and lids for your pots
- Turn handles from your pots and pans away from the edge of your stove top to prevent spills
- Check the maximum temperature of your kitchenware before heating
- Turn on your hood fan while using your stove
- Use pot holders to protect your table or counters from hot kitchenware



- Don't touch hot surfaces or hot kitchenware with your hands
- Don't put your face near hot vapors
- Don't pour oil into a hot pan all at once
- Don't put metal or aluminum in the microwave
- Don't put plastic in the oven or on your stove top
- Don't put wooden utensils in the oven
- Don't put packaging in the oven or in the microwave
- Don't use a knife to remove your bread from the toaster
- Don't put hot kitchenware directly on your countertops

- Know the risks of fire associated with using kitchen appliances:
 - It's important to have a fire extinguisher in the house and in the kitchen. Check it regularly to make sure it hasn't expired, and know how to use it in case of fire. You might also consider keeping [a fire blanket](#) in or near your kitchen.
 - It is important to make sure your fire alarm and carbon monoxide detector are working. They will help detect smoke if food is burning, and warn you if there is a carbon monoxide leak.

After cooking

- Make sure you thoroughly clean the kitchen and appliances that you have used. Consult the maintenance guide for each appliance before cleaning it and follow these general guidelines:
 - Make sure your appliance is cooled down and turned off
 - Never clean a plugged-in appliance. Turn off your appliances before unplugging them to avoid electric shocks.
 - Check your appliance for a “self-cleaning” function
 - Use a wet washcloth with soap to wipe up crumbs and/or a cleaning product for stubborn stains.
- Store your food safely to avoid food poisoning. Here is a [Safe Food Storage](#) guide you can consult.

References:

- [Kitchen Safety 101 - Penniless Parenting](#)
- [Basics of Knife Safety - ChefSac.com](#)
- [Knife Safety - Ottawa Public Health](#)