

NEWS RELEASE

Jean A. Ince

County Extension Agent-

Staff Chair

March 14, 2022

**DO NOT FORGET THE FILTERS AS YOU SPRING CLEAN**

Warm weather is just around the corner and soon we will be opening the windows to let the breeze in. Warm weather may also get you motivated to do some spring cleaning. As you focus on getting everything brightened up, don't forget about the filters in your home.

Changing the filters throughout your house isn't something we often think about. However, it is a very important job of appliance maintenance. If you let filters go too long without cleaning or replacing them, your appliance will not work as efficiently or it may stop working altogether. Before you switch over to air conditioning mode on your thermostat, take a few minutes to check and possibly change the filters. Filters keep the air circulating. Once they get clogged up, air can't move through the system, putting a strain on the appliance.

Some filters you will want to look at include:

- **Refrigerator** – Does your ice have an off flavor to it? It may be caused by a clogged filter. Change the filter at least every six months if you have an ice maker or water dispenser. When filters become clogged, they can cause the water output to be slower and you may notice smaller ice cubes. Many refrigerators have automated reminder systems that let you know it's time to replace the filter. If yours doesn't, mark your calendar to change it every six months.
- **Heater and air conditioner filters** – Changing these filters often will help prevent dust buildup in your home. You won't have to dust furniture as often and the air quality will be better. It also helps make your unit more energy efficient. You'll have more money in

your pocket and a clean house too! Dispose of used filters. Throw them away and get new ones.

- **Dryer** – You probably clean the lint filter before or after every load, but you also need to clean out your dryer vent and duct regularly as well. Remove the lint trap and vacuum to remove any large pieces of lint. Pull the dryer away from the wall, unplug it and remove the duct joint at the back. Then vacuum the duct and insert a brush to clean out any lint that may be trapped.
- **Humidifier/dehumidifier** – Portable units have filters that need to be replaced in order for them to work properly. Whole home humidifiers usually come with disposable filters that should be replaced every year. Check the owner's manual for recommendations on changing the filter.

We all want healthy, happy homes. Proper cleaning and maintenance can help you have the home you want. Information for this article was adapted from the American Cleaning Institute website <https://cleanandhappynest.org> Check them out or visit the Howard County Cooperative Extension Service for more information on consumer issues.

### Recipe of the Week

Here is a favorite diabetic recipe that is perfect for Spring. If you love chocolate and you are diabetic, you will love this recipe. Perfect for family gatherings and potlucks!

### **Chocolate Angel Food Cake**

1 box (14.5 oz. angel food cake mix)

¼ cup unsweetened cocoa, sifted

¼ tsp. chocolate flavoring

1 cup skim milk

1 (4-serving) box sugar-free instant chocolate pudding

8 oz. light whipped topping substitute

In a large bowl, combine cake packet with cocoa. Prepare cake according to package directions. Fold in chocolate flavoring. Bake cake in tube pan according to package directions.

When cool, remove from pan.

In a medium-sized bowl, blend milk and instant pudding with mixer for one to two minutes. Fold in whipped topping. spread on cooled cake before cutting. Garnish with fresh fruit if desired.

Yield: 12 servings

Nutrition Information per Serving: 205 Calories, 6 g. Protein, 5 g Fat, 1 mg Cholesterol, 40 g, Carbohydrates, 202 mg. Sodium, 1 g. Fiber