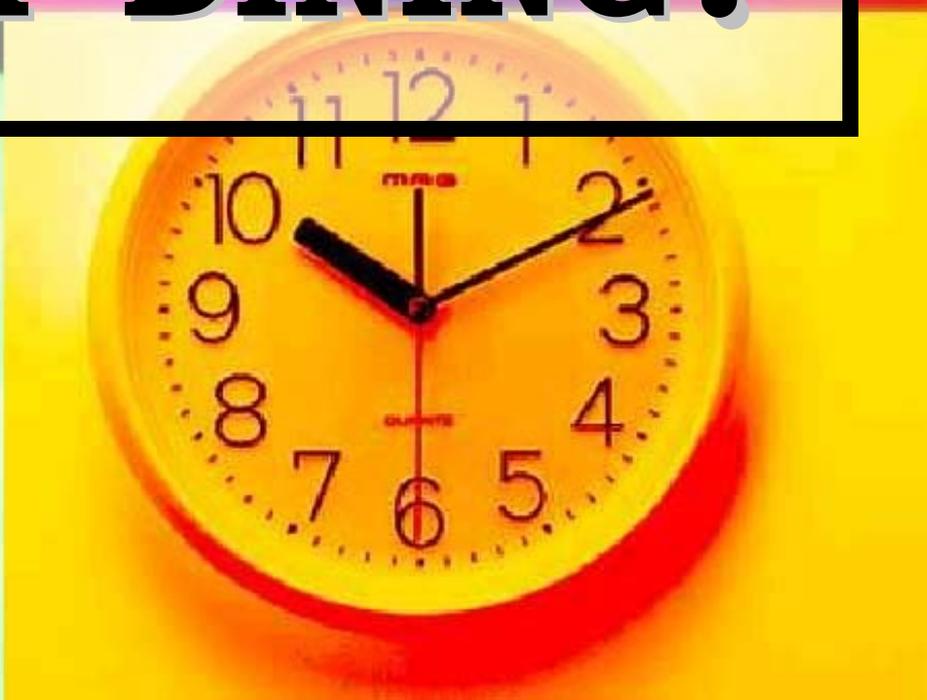




**DESKTOP DINING!**





Whether it's a bagel and coffee, a sandwich and soup, last night's leftovers or a takeout meal, desktop dining has become a common way people multitask their way through e-mails, paperwork, phone calls, breakfast and lunch, even dinner.



Opting for a bite at your desk can save time during a hectic work day, but there's an unhealthy downside to eating at your desk.

Desktop dining could leave you feeling ill, lethargic, and carrying a few more pounds than you'd like.



## Consider this!

The average desktop is home to 100 times more bacteria than a kitchen table and 400 times more than the average toilet seat.

*That's what a team of microbiologists from the University of Arizona learned when they measured bacterial levels inside offices located in New York, San Francisco, Tucson and Tampa.*



The five most germ-contaminated spots were (in order): phones, desktops, water fountain handles, microwave door handles and keyboards.

*The office toilet seat had the lowest bacteria levels of the 12 surfaces tested.*



These results aren't too surprising when you consider that everything on your desk gets touched by you and by anyone else who shares your work space.

What's more, many people don't take the time to wipe down their work area -- unless they start sticking to it.



In the study, the researchers divided co-workers into two groups -- one group used disinfectant wipes to clean their desks, phones and computers; the other didn't. Among people who didn't clean their desks, bacteria levels increased as much as 31 per cent during the day. **If desktop surfaces were wiped down once daily, germ levels declined by 99.9 per cent.**



- There are other reasons to stop using your desk as a kitchen table, even if you do keep it bug-free. Eating while you work can lead to overeating.
- If you pay more attention to your inbox than your meal -- or cram in a sandwich en route to an afternoon meeting -- you're not likely to notice when you feel full.



Eating at your desk also means you don't get up and move around. Even a 10-minute brisk walk can increase your heart rate and keeps you feeling energized for up to two hours.

# Safe desktop dining

If you do eat at your desk, or in the lunchroom, take precautions to keep your food safe to eat:

- Keep the desk clean. Regularly sanitize your work space using disposable anti-microbial wipes or a cloth with cleaner.
- Wash your hands often, using soap and hot water for 20 seconds. If you don't have time for soap and water, use a hand sanitizer stored in your desk drawer.



# Safe desktop dining

- If your brown-bag lunch contains perishables -- meat, cheese, leftovers, salads, dairy foods -- make sure it gets stored in the fridge within two hours of making it at home. Ensure leftovers -- from your brown bag or takeout meal -- don't sit out for more than two hours.
- When reheating leftovers for another meal, heat foods to a safe internal temperature of 74 C (165 F).



# Safe desktop dining

- Be leery of pizza, deli trays, salads and sandwiches left lingering in lunchrooms or boardrooms. If the food has been there for two hours, give it a pass.
- Keep anti-bacterial wipes in the lunchroom so co-workers can clean up spills and splatters. Avoid using dish rags and sponges that can spread germs if they're not run through a dishwasher daily.



# Safe desktop dining

- Make sure the office refrigerator is cleaned out weekly by those who use it. Schedule Friday afternoons to pitch and purge and check that the temperature is set at 4 C (40 F) or colder.



# Safe desktop dining

- Avoid stocking a grocery store in your desk drawer. A drawer full of goodies can attract pests and spoil in high temperatures when the office is closed. Keep a limited supply of non-perishable snacks like individually packaged almonds, energy bars, ready-to-go tuna and cracker kits, and single servings of canned fruit.



# Safe desktop dining

- You may not have the luxury of a one-hour lunch break, but try taking 15 minutes to focus on eating your meal. And if possible, do it away from your desk.



# Follow Fridge Safety

According to the ADA survey, 44 percent of office refrigerators are cleaned only once a month, and 22 percent are cleaned just once or twice a year. Yet most perishable foods have a shelf life of just three to five days! Don't wait for the clean-up crew to throw out your leftovers: Label and date your food and make sure to toss it in a timely fashion.



# Manage the Microwave

More than half of all employees (53.4%) say the microwave in their office kitchen is cleaned only once a month or less - possibly leaving dried-up, splattered sauces on the inside walls. Be courteous when microwaving meals by keeping food containers covered. And if food splatters, wipe down the microwave immediately, while the food is still easy to remove.



# Tools of the Trade

Make the most of your desktop dining experience by stocking up on these essential food safety supplies:

- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfectant wipes or paper towels and spray cleanser
- Office refrigerator or insulated lunch bag with freezer pack



# Tools of the Trade

- Labels for leftovers
- Refrigerator thermometer (make sure your office fridge is set properly below 40 degrees F)
- Meat thermometer (always reheat leftover lunch foods to an internal temperature of 165 degrees F)





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