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Garbage Disposal Repair and Replacement

When your garbage disposal makes kitchen cleanup a chore instead of a breeze, you may need to repair it. An appliance repairperson, plumber or handyman can fix some issues, but you might have to consider garbage disposal replacement.

Here's how to determine if you need a simple repair or a new disposal.

Clogged garbage disposal:

A humming noise with no waste removal, or no noise at all when the garbage disposal unit is turned on, both indicate a probable clog.

If you find your garbage disposal clogged, you can follow these steps to fix it yourself. If that fails, most homeowners choose to contact a professional, especially if they don't have the plumbing or electrical knowledge to troubleshoot a jammed garbage disposal.

"(Disposals) can take a lot of punishment, but they can get stuck if someone puts too much down in there," says Greg Friedman of Mr. Appliance of Northern Virginia in metropolitan Washington D.C. "There's no damage, it just overloads the motor, which has a kick-off switch. It usually just needs to be cleaned out and reset."

The cost to fix a clogged disposal ranges from the low \$100s to low \$200s.

Garbage disposal cleaning:



Garbage disposal leak:

A pool of water underneath your sink from a leaky garbage disposal presents a bigger issue.

"That's usually caused by a seal or something that's worn out over time," Friedman says. "At that point, it's not really worth repairing parts-wise. It's time to replace the whole thing."

New garbage disposal:

New garbage disposal installation typically costs \$250 to \$450, including the new unit and removal of the old one. Disposals themselves cost between \$50 and \$350. There are a number of features available, including power options, noise reduction, anti-jamming and more. Expect to pay more for a disposal with these high-tech aspects.

When installing a garbage disposal, choose one with a warranty. Many models include a two-year warranty that covers most damage. If the model you like doesn't have a standard warranty, ask for additional coverage.

Brand new garbage disposals work faster and more efficiently than older models, saving you time and utility costs in the long run. However, it's important to properly maintain your disposal. Run it each day to keep it clear of debris, always run water before and after grinding, and don't push too much waste down the disposal at one time.