Most of us have an imaginary cleaning list in our heads we dreadfully whip out on the weekend and try to get through as fast as possible. More often than not, our cleaning lists are similar: clean bathrooms, dust, vacuum, dishes, laundry. The occasional 'window cleaning' might pop up if the sun is shining on them the right way.

Sanitizing the TV remote control or shower curtain rarely comes to mind, yet those are just some of the items that carry the most germs in your house — and no, you're not off the hook if you don't have kids.

Lucky for us, experts in cleaning (who knew they were out there?) have compiled a checklist of household chores and their frequency to help us keep our germs at bay. A team of the Good Housekeeping Institute has identified the tasks we need to do daily, weekly, and some that we can get away with doing monthly, or even yearly. And if you don't follow this advice wholeheartedly, nothing bad will happen to you. Here goes:

**Daily**

- **Clean toilets**: This is a no-brainer. Toilets see quite a bit of activity from multiple people during the day, so scrub those babies to no end. No ifs, and's, or buts about it.
- **Clean kitchen surfaces**: Cross-contamination — which can lead to illness — is likely to happen on kitchen surfaces. Be sure to sanitize and wipe down thoroughly after cooking each meal.
- **Clean yourself**: it is generally frowned upon to go more than a day without taking a shower.

**Weekly**
• **Wash towels:** generally speaking, it's best to launder your towel after it's been used three times. Not to be confused with three days: the distinction is important. Moisture breeds bacteria, so dampness in your environment also plays a factor.

• **Change bed linens:** As a general rule of thumb, changing your bed linens (or washing them) once a week is ideal. But there are other considerations that might lead one to swap them more or less frequently than others. For instance: do you sleep naked? Do you sleep with a partner/spouse? The dog? Three cats? Small children? Do you eat cookies in bed (be honest)? Are you prone to night sweats? I'm guessing you answered Yes to more than one of these and have since realized you're sleeping in a zoo of bacteria. Moving on.

• **Dust surfaces:** If allergies aren't a problem in your household, dusting weekly (or even monthly) should do the trick.

• **Clean remote:** Think about it — it's dropped on the floor, stuffed between the sofa cushions, and you certainly don't clean your hands while eating pizza and switching back and forth between This is Us and The Bachelor. Your TV remote is one of the dirtiest household items and the source of bacteria that could be harmful.

**Monthly**

• **Wash windows:** This dreaded task offers no particular health benefits, but it does aid against glass degradation, heat efficiency, and a better view!

• **Vacuum under furniture:** If you have small children or pets, chances are Godzilla could be living under your sofa. Though vacuuming should be done weekly on its own, moving furniture to suck up old pizza crusts or Legos helps halt the spread of germs, too.

• **Clean dishwasher:** This task is often overlooked until your dishes start coming out dirtier than when you loaded them. Tip: one cup of baking soda sprinkled on the bottom of the dishwasher, plus 1/2 cup of white vinegar on the top rack will do wonders to your most prized possession.

**Every 3-6 months**

• **Vacuum mattress:** You might think your mattress is protected from germs and bacteria because you cover it with bed linens. Not true. As we reminded you recently [1], a mattress can double in weight after ten years, due to the effects of sweat, dead skin, hair and dust mites that feed on that dead skin. Yuk!

• **Clean duvet/pillows:** Same goes for your bed accessories!

• **Clean fridge:** Your fridge can hold a lot of leftover residue from meats and produce that can cause cross-contamination.

Though household work can seem like a never-ending task, it's important to at least pay attention to some of the more germ-generating items, especially in the bedroom. After all, the average person will sleep for 229,961 hours in their lifetime, roughly 1/3 of our lives.