

**Controls:** Look at the controls on the dishwasher you are considering. Are they easy to understand and use? Some dishwashers are controlled with electronic touch pads while others have knobs. In addition, some control panels are hidden from view when the door is closed. Some dishwashers have lock-out controls.

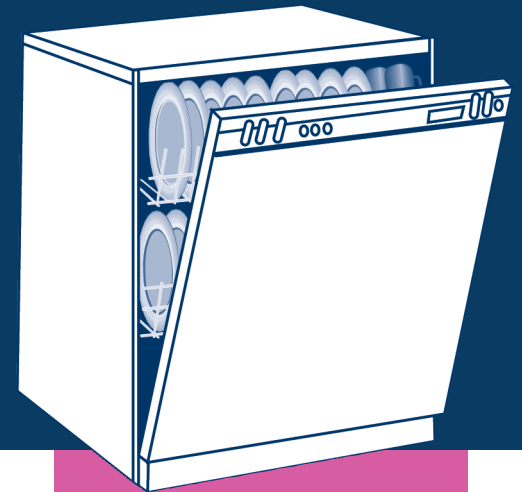
- In addition to the purchase price, consider the lifetime costs of operating the dishwasher. This includes water and electricity costs.
- The dishwasher is an appliance that truly saves time. Research reveals that a dishwasher can save 25 eight-hour days a year compared with washing dishes by hand.
- Using a dishwasher instead of washing dishes by hand saves water—more than 2,000 gallons of water a year for the average household.
- Dishwashers provide more sanitation for dishes. They reduce the spread of illness because ordinary bacteria are killed by high temperatures and the alkalinity of detergent solution.
- Dishwashers also come in drawer, portable, and convertible models, as well as the built-in models.

**Energy Guide labels:** The bright yellow Energy Guide labels help you compare the energy costs of one dishwasher with another. See how the model you are considering compares with similar dishwasher models.

**Energy Star:** The ENERGY STAR® means a product meets strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy. ENERGY STAR® qualified dishwashers use 25 percent less energy than the federal minimum standard for energy consumption.



# Purchasing a Dishwasher



For more information, contact your county Extension agent for Family and Consumer Sciences, or visit the Web site for Family and Consumer Sciences, College of Agriculture, University of Kentucky, at [www.ca.uky/agcollege/fcs](http://www.ca.uky/agcollege/fcs)

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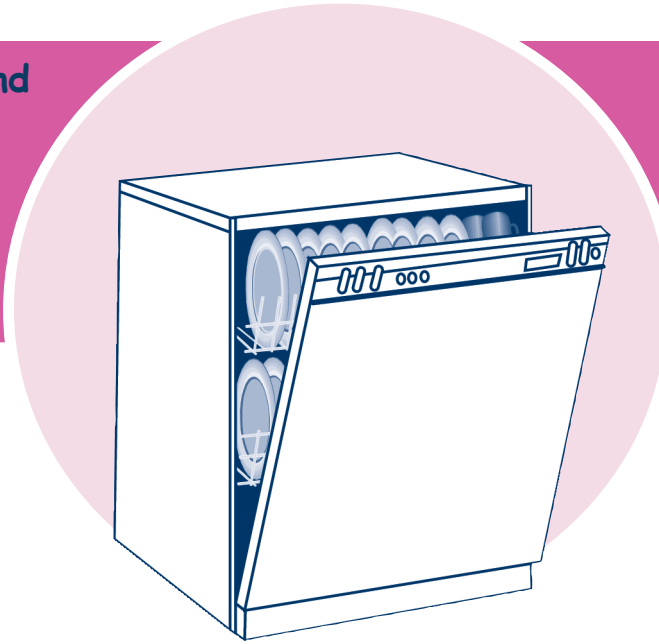
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Dishwashers come in all shapes and sizes and with a variety of great features. Before you buy a dishwasher, consider your personal dishwashing needs. Here are some things to think about.



**Type of dishes to wash:** Dishwashers come with various wash/rinse cycle combinations. Think about the dishes you wash on a regular basis. If you use lots of pans when you cook, for example, you might want to consider a dishwasher that has a cycle with a longer wash/scrub time for heavily soiled items. If you mostly wash plates, cups, glasses, and tableware, choose a dishwasher that does not have the longer wash or extra rinse cycles.

**Dish racks:** When shopping for a dishwasher, look at the racks to see if your dishes, stemware, etc., will fit in them. Many models of dishwashers have racks that allow flexibility in loading. For example, some upper dish racks will tilt or lower to accommodate long stemware, such as goblets and champagne glasses.

If you wash a lot of mixing bowls and pans, find out if the "fingers" on the racks lower to allow you to load large and irregularly shaped items into the dishwasher. Also check to see if you can remove or raise the upper rack to accommodate extra tall pans and platters. Remember: A dishwasher should fit your dishwashing needs.

**Wash arms:** Many dishwashers have a separate wash arm for each dish rack. Other dishwashers have wash arms in

the bottom of the dishwasher only. If you choose the latter, you will need to be careful loading the dishwasher so you do not block the flow of water to the upper rack of dishes. Two or more wash arms will provide better results.

**Water-saving options:** Some dishwashers have a soil sensor mechanism. This mechanism will sense the amount of soil in the wash water and automatically program the dishwasher for an extra wash and/or rinse cycle. If there is very little soil in the wash water, the dishwasher will reduce the number of wash and rinse cycles, allowing you to conserve water. There are other water-saving features, including shorter wash cycles, to consider as well.

**Filters/food waste disposer:** Many dishwashers now contain a small food waste disposer in the bottom of the dishwasher to grind up large food particles and flush them out with the wash water. Other dishwashers have a mesh filter/screen that catches and flushes out food particles. Be sure you know which mechanism is in the dishwasher you are considering.

**Water heating:** To increase energy efficiency, some dishwasher models have an internal water heater. This mechanism heats water to 140 to 160 degrees, allowing the user to get optimum wash results and avoid heat loss in the water line between the regular water heater and the dishwasher. Check to see if this heating option is available for both wash and rinse cycles.

**Heated drying:** Many dishwashers offer a "no heat" option for the drying part of the cycle. This is another energy-saving feature that is attractive to many consumers.

**Interior finish and materials:** Dishwashers come with stainless steel, porcelain enamel, and polyvinyl interior finishes.

**Exterior finish and color:** The exterior of dishwashers may have a stainless steel or painted finish, or the exterior may be custom coordinated with your kitchen cabinets.

The average life of a dishwasher is nine to 13 years.