

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: “What kind of ‘Use and Care’ instructions would you recommend for the nonstick cookware I’m selling? I want to put instructions on the packaging and want to make sure I don’t miss anything.”

Answer: “The process is rather straightforward. In the box to the right is what we usually suggest to our customers, and here is why.

“The pan should be washed first, just to make sure it is clean and free of any contamination that may have occurred from the manufacturing through the application of the nonstick to the packing.

“Next, every pan should be ‘seasoned’. This means pouring a bit of cooking oil into it and rubbing it in with a paper towel.

“After each use, the pan should be cleaned with warm, soapy water and dried before it is put away. No further seasoning is necessary. Remember that one of the oft-forgotten advantages of nonstick coatings is the fact that you do not have to use cooking oil, which eliminates a lot of unnecessary calories as well as helps keep the cholesterol numbers down.

“Now: a word about dishwashers: the chemicals used in dishwasher detergents are notoriously strong. While today’s nonstick coatings are totally safe in a dishwasher, the chemicals can strip away the seasoning. So, if you put a pan in the dishwasher, it should be reseasoned prior to use.

“Two other points to remember: dishwashers are tough on wooden handles and can lead to pitting of anodized cookware.”

Question: “What about using metal utensils?”

Answer: “Top-of-the-line coatings

Sensible care will help your new cookware last for years and years. These simple steps will help you get the most pleasure and use from it:

1. Before using this (or any nonstick) cookware for the first time, wash it to make sure it is clean. Then season it by lightly rubbing cooking oil onto the nonstick surface. When it cools, sponge it with a mild detergent in warm water and rinse clean. It’s ready to go!
2. Always use low or medium heat when cooking food. This helps preserve the nutrients in food (many of which are fragile, and easily damaged when heated to extremes). It also helps preserve the nonstick surface.
3. While today’s best nonsticks are designed to stand up to rough treatment, all nonsticks will last longer if you are careful not to stab the surface with a sharp point or cut foods with a knife while food is in the cookware.
4. Do not overheat empty cookware, although careful, quick searing is okay. Always be sure that oil, water or food materials are in the cookware prior to heating it.
5. Do not use cookware as a food storage container, which could encourage staining. It’s better to keep cookware clean when not in use.
6. Always allow cookware to cool before immersing in water.
7. Your new cookware is perfectly safe to put into the dishwasher (reseason after), but the nonstick surface is so easy to clean that a quick handwash does the trick.
8. If, through misuse, burned residue collects on the surface, it can usually be removed with warm water and a mild detergent. In an extreme case, such residue can be removed by a thorough cleaning with this solution: 3 tablespoons bleach, 1 table spoon liquid dish detergent and 1 cup of water. Apply to the cooking surface with a sponge or plastic scrubbing pad. After cleaning, recondition the surface with a light wipe of cooking oil.

NOTE ABOUT PET BIRDS: Always observe the rules of sensible cooking and never let foodstuffs or an empty nonstick pan overheat. Both may cause fumes which, while not dangerous to humans or most household pets, can adversely affect pet birds. Birds have unusually sensitive respiratory systems, and are easily affected by such fumes. Pet birds should always be kept in a well-ventilated room, and never in the kitchen.

will stand up to almost anything. But even the best nonsticks are not indestructible, so make sure you discourage rough treatment such as cutting food while in the pan (a common mistake consumers make).

“This is particularly important if you decide to offer a warranty (as so many cookware manufacturers are doing these days).”

Send questions with your name, address to: Fran Attilio, Whitford

Corp., Box 2347, West Chester, PA 19380-0110, call (718) 967-7967 or email: fattilio@whitfordww.com.

Coming in future issues:

- **Testing Guidelines: Don’t confuse cookware tests with bakeware tests (they’re different).**

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