

Dishwashers for the Immune-Impaired | Earth911.com

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For most people, the dishwasher sanitize cycle is overkill; there is little point sterilizing dishes in a household environment.

Family members already have close contact with each other. When it comes to germ transference, kissing is far more effective than dinner plates. Not to mention that our [kitchen sponges](#) contain more bacteria than the dishes they clean — up to 5.4×10^{10} cells per cm^3 .

But what if someone in your house has a compromised immune system and you've already taken steps to clean up bacterial hotspots in your house? In those cases, a sanitize cycle in your dishwasher may give you some piece of mind.

By necessity, sanitize cycles — which require higher temperatures and often use more water — are not as green as regular dishwasher cycles. But the health benefits for an immune-compromised person will outweigh energy use. If you purchase a sanitizing dishwasher, look for other ways to reduce energy consumption to offset the choice.

What Does Sanitize Really Mean?

Dishwashers advertised as capable of sanitizing your dishes should be [NSF/ANSI Standard 184](#) certified. To meet this standard, a residential dishwasher operating on the sanitizing cycle must be able to achieve a minimum 99.999 percent (or 5-log, for the scientifically-minded) reduction of bacteria and reach a final rinse temperature of 150 degrees Fahrenheit.

A dishwasher with a certified sanitization cycle really does provide nearly the same level of sterilization as a hospital autoclave. NSF-certified products will bear the [NSF mark](#).

Top Sanitizing Dishwashers

Fortunately, many of the [most efficient dishwashers](#) come with sanitization cycles. Here's how the highest-ranking brands perform.

Some manufacturers may offer a certified sanitize cycle on all dishwasher models. But it is wise to check the [NSF/ANSI 184 Residential Dishwashers product listing](#) to confirm that the specific model you are considering is certified.

Miele

The top brand in our consumer guide was [Miele](#). Their website lists 27 models of full-size, NSF/ANSI Standard 184 certified dishwashers — 7 of them are also Energy Star certified.

The Miele Futura Crystal G5105SCU is [Reviewed.com](#)'s top sanitizing dishwasher.

Asko

Dishwashers by the Scandinavian-design brand [Asko](#) come with a “Hygiene” program. Intended for baby bottles and cutting boards, the Hygiene program raises the temperature to 158 degrees Fahrenheit in the main wash and final rinse programs.

However, they have not received NSF certification.

Beko & Blomberg

[Beko](#) and [Blomberg](#) dishwashers are both made by the Turkish company [Arçelik A.S.](#) The parent company is [listed by the NSF](#) as a certified producer. The Dora and Poseidon series specifically identified as certified products.

Smeg

Several of Italian manufacturer [Smeg's](#) dishwashers feature either the UltraClean or the HyClean option, including the 50s retro style STFABUCR-1, if you're looking for a unique kitchen design.

In both cases, the dishwasher performs an additional rinse at 158 F. However, Smeg dishwashers **do not** have NSF certification.

Other Certified Brands

Most of the other brands on Earth911's [greenest dishwashers](#) list make sanitizing dishwashers, too.

[Frigidaire](#) is owned by Electrolux. Although the NSF product listing includes dozens of Electrolux dishwashers, they are identified only by model number, rather than brand. It is likely that some of them are Frigidaire dishwashers, but consumers will have to dig a little bit to find out if their specific model is one of them.

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