

Admonition # 4

Don't forget to clean. Remember to give your mother a fresh towel on weekly Bake Days, and more often as needed.

Keeping everything clean is essential to creating an ideal environment for your mother to thrive. When things need a little freshening, you're most likely to notice it on the flour-sack towel that covers your Counter Mother. A light tan to medium-brown stain will appear in the middle. This is a watermark. When you see this, simply replace the towel with a fresh one. The watermark will come right out in the wash. Aside from the towel that covers your mother, there are a few key points about cleanliness I'd like to touch on.

Household Cleaners

Think of your mother as a giant sponge capable of soaking up everything in its environment. Now, think of the cleaners you're using in your home and the detergents you're using to launder the flour-sack towel that covers your mother. Do you feel comfortable using those cleaners in close proximity to your mother? If you are using bleach, overly-fragrant cleaners, or laundry detergents, the answer should be no. When cultivating a Counter Mother, opt for gentle, fragrance-free cleaners.

Cross-Contamination

Keeping your mother out of the general area when you are prepping raw meat or eggs to avoid introducing bacteria into your mother is always essential. Additionally, your mother should be kept away from store-bought yeasts. If you ferment or brew at home, try to keep these things separated from your mother. If you make cheese at home, move your mother away when doing so. Yeasts from your mother can make their way into your cheeses, which yields an undesirable result in your cheeses. All of this is not intended to give the impression that your mother needs to be kept completely separate from home-brewing, fermenting, or cheesemaking. It is more to raise a flag of awareness, so you can manage it at your discretion.

General Cleaning

When you are maintaining a Counter Mother, each week you will wash the *Glasslock* bowl and *Marinex* baking dish on Bake Days. Washing the bowl once per week should be sufficient, but you can wash it more if you feel it's necessary.

When you move to the Advanced Section and are keeping a Refrigerator Mother, you should wash the *Pyrex* loaf pan it's stored in periodically. After a couple feedings, you may start to see some build-up on the sides. This is a good time to wash the pan. Also, as long as you keep up on consistent weekly feedings, mold is unlikely. However, the first place it's likely to appear is on the lid that covers your mother. At each feeding, be sure to give the lid a once-over.