

Hygienic efficiency of dishwashers for drinking glasses in the food service sector

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Insufficiently cleaned drinking glasses can potentially transmit harmful viruses such as noroviruses and bacteria such as *Salmonella*, *Escherichia coli* or *Streptococcus*. Glasses and dishes used in the food service sector should thus not only be cleaned but also disinfected for hygienic purposes. The effectiveness of cleaning depends on water temperature, quality and contact time with cleaning agents and disinfectants. Machine washing, in which these factors are exactly specified, warrants hygienic results. In pubs, bars and restaurants, glasses are often cleaned manually using brushes and by dipping them into a sink. The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has drawn up an Opinion on the adequacy of washing measures in the food service sector in respect to the hygiene of drinking glasses.

According to general BfR information, glasses that are cleaned with cold water and disinfectant do not adequately protect consumers from the transmission of germs through contact with contaminated glasses. However, no studies are available on the transmission of germs through drinking glasses in the population. There is an additional lack of data regarding the efficiency of manual cleaning procedures commonly used in the food service sector.

In order to minimise consumer health risks through contact with contaminated glasses, BfR recommends that businesses develop a reasonable cleaning schedule and train all staff in personnel and dishwashing hygiene. In the medium term, experimental studies on the degree of hygiene reached when glasses are washed with the usual methods in the food service sector should be carried out.

The full version of this BfR Opinion is available in German on http://www.bfr.bund.de/cm/208/hygienische_wirksamkeit_von_spuelgeraeten_zum_reinigen_von_trinkglaesern_in_der_gastronomie.pdf