

# A COMPLETE GUIDE ON MAINTAINING A REFRIGERATOR AND PREVENT DAMAGE



# ABSTRACT

Refrigerators are one of the most-used appliances in the home. We'll teach you how to keep your fridge in great shape and potentially extend its life with our refrigerator maintenance tips.

## INTRODUCTION

Wondering how to maintain a refrigerator and why you should do it? Your refrigerator is probably the most hardworking appliance in your home because it runs 24x7 all year long. It safely stores vegetables, fruits, dairy products, chocolates, juices, water, leftovers, and more. Just a couple of hours of power supply failure or breakdown can lead to spoilt fruits and milk. So, no one wants their refrigerator to break down in the middle of hot summers (or any season for that matter). Hence, keeping the refrigerator in tip-top condition is in everyone's own best interest.

### I. How To Maintain Your Refrigerator

The refrigerator is one of the most costly items in the home so maintain it well to keep cash in your pocket



The most essential piece of equipment in the kitchen, make sure your fridges is running efficiently for better food storage and to keep energy costs down.

**GIVE IT ENOUGH ROOM** by allowing at least a 10mm gap at the sides and 20mm behind. If the fridge is in direct sun, install a blind to screen it. Better still, ventilate the fridge space to the roof void or through outside walls.

**CLEAN IT INSIDE AND OUT** every four to six months, working from the top down and cleaning one shelf or area at a time. Wipe the interior with a mild detergent solution or bicarb soda.

**WASH REMOVABLE SHELVES** in the sink with warm water and detergent, but let glass shelves come to room temperature first to avoid cracks.

**CLEAR THE DRAIN HOLE** at the base of the fridge and wipe the door seals, taking care to clear all dirt from the grooves.

**WIPE THE COILS** and around the motor every three months as dust can cause the unit to run poorly. Unplug the fridge, pull it out and use the vacuum cleaner's brush attachment.

**KEEP IT LEVEL** to make it efficient. Raise or lower the feet or castors using an adjustable wrench, or turn the levelling screws with a shifter. Use a spirit level to ensure that the fridge is balanced.

**CHECK DOOR SEALS** twice a year to keep food fresh and energy costs down. Close the door on a sheet of paper then try to pull the paper out. If there's little resistance, the seal isn't working. Coat the flat surface with petroleum jelly, or completely replace a stiff or cracked seal.

### Keep the freezer well stocked

A well-stocked freezer isn't just good news for mealtimes, it also keeps your freezer running at maximum efficiency as there's less circulating air that has to be cooled. Fill empty spaces with containers of water. They will not only improve your freezer's performance but also help to keep the contents cold for longer in the event of a power cut.

### Choosing a new model

Refrigerators are switched on and running 24 hours a day, all year long. They account for about 20% of the electricity used in the average home, so it definitely pays to make sure they run as efficiently as possible.

When you need to replace your fridge, choose one with the highest energy rating you can afford and look for the energy-saving logo. The most efficient new models can save about two-thirds of the power used by a 10-year-old fridge.

## **II. Refrigerator Maintenance Steps You Should Know to Save on Energy Costs**

A refrigerator is an expensive appliance that most of us use without much thought. However, like most appliances in a home, fridges require some routine maintenance. Unlike cleaning a dryer vent (which you may not want to do without the help of a professional), anyone can tackle these simple tasks. It doesn't matter if you own or rent your home or have no home maintenance experience.



If you rent a home and don't own the fridge (and therefore aren't in charge of maintaining it), it's still helpful to keep the fridge in good condition. Why? The better your fridge works, the more money you'll save on your energy bill. Those small savings will add up over time and help reduce your carbon footprint.

## Basic Maintenance Steps

### Check the door seals

A loose seal on the fridge door allows cool air to seep out, wasting energy and causing your fridge to work harder than it needs to. First, make sure the seals are free of food residue. You should clean them about twice a year using a toothbrush and a solution of baking soda and water. Then try the dollar-bill test: Close the bill in the door so that half is in and half is out. If it slips out easily, you may need to have the door seals checked by a pro.

### Keep the coils clean

When the condenser coils are covered with dust, the refrigerator can't run efficiently. Twice a year, pull the machine from the wall to reveal the coils in the back (or snap off the grille if the coils are on the bottom front), unplug the refrigerator, and vacuum the coils with the brush attachment.

### Set the right temperature

A fridge at the wrong temperature will either run too long or not long enough. Keep the fridge between 37 and 40 degrees Fahrenheit and the freezer at 0 degrees. There are several ways to keep your fridge at the right temperature, and the most important is ensuring the door seals are functional (see step one).

### Fill it up (even if you never cook and only have takeout)

Refrigerators need "thermal mass" (a.k.a. lots of stuff) to maintain low temperatures while using less energy. Cool foods and drinks help absorb warm air that streams in

when you open the door. If you're the eat-out type or your fridge is too big for your needs, store a few jugs of water in there. Just make sure you don't stuff your fridge too much. There needs to be some air circulating around your items.

### Be prepared for a power outage

If the power goes out, an easy way to lose all that saved energy is by opening the door every hour in a panic to check on the food. Keep the doors closed and use food from the pantry. An unopened refrigerator will keep food safe for four hours; a freezer will maintain its temperature for 48 hours if full and 24 hours if half-full.

## **III. 10 Reasons Your Refrigerator Is Not Cooling & How to Fix It**

If you open your refrigerator and find sour milk or warm wine it should be apparent that your fridge is not cooling well enough. The problem is more than just one of annoyance and odors; it's a health issue. Listeria and other foodborne pathogens, along with mold, can grow in refrigerators that are not cool enough.



In many cases, there is no need to rush out and buy a new refrigerator. While you may need to eventually call in an appliance technician for some repairs, other fixes are simple to do and require no special tools or knowledge.

Listed below are 10 straightforward reasons why your refrigerator is not cooling and what to do about them.

### Tip

The average lifespan of a refrigerator is around 10 years and can last for up to 20 years if maintained properly.

## Temperature Control Is Improperly Set

Resetting the temperature control is often the first and easiest fix for a refrigerator that is not cool enough. If you have children in your home, they are sometimes the culprits behind temperature control changes, especially if they are on the fridge exterior.

But anything can inadvertently reset the temperature, including brushing against it with your hand or food items being pushed into the fridge or freezer.

A problem with the temperature control may also be the reason you hear your fridge compressor running but the appliance is not cooling down its contents.

### How To Fix It:

- Change the thermostat down to the desired temperature setting.
- Be sure to check both the freezer and the refrigerator, as they should have separate controls.
- Don't expect the temperature in the box to change immediately. Instead, allow a full day for the temperature to restabilize.

## What Is Optimal Fridge Temperature?

The FDA recommends that refrigerators be at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or lower and that freezers be set at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. Purchase a separate appliance thermometer to check temperatures rather than relying on internal gauges.

## Condenser Coils Are Dirty

When the condenser coils on the back of the refrigerator are dirty or covered in spiderwebs, the unit cannot properly cool. One of the easiest maintenance items you can do for your refrigerator is to pull it out and clean off the condenser coils at least every six months.

### How To Fix It:

- Unlatch the anti-tip brackets located at the exterior bottom-front of the cabinet.
- Carefully slide the refrigerator out and clean the coils with the hand attachment on a vacuum cleaner.
- Be careful not to bend or otherwise damage the coils.

## Tip

If you have pets, you should consider pulling the refrigerator out and cleaning the coils more frequently than every six months.

## Door Gaskets Are Not Clean

Over time, the flexible door seals (gaskets) can become dirty from food or fingerprints, preventing the door from sealing properly.

### *How To Fix It:*

- Wipe down the gaskets with a sponge and warm, soapy water.
- Also, wipe down the sections on the fridge where the gaskets touch.
- Do not use abrasive cleaners, brushes, scouring pads, flammable fluids, or window cleaning sprays.

## Food Items Are Blocking the Air Vents

Most refrigerators receive cool air from vents in the freezer section, regardless of the position of the freezer. This includes side-by-side refrigerators that are not cooling, too. Food items inside the refrigerator portion of the appliance might be blocking the cool air vent from letting the freezer air come through.

### *How To Fix It:*

- Look for large boxes or bags that may have been inadvertently placed in front of the vents, preventing cool air from entering the unit.
- Pull those items aside or locate them on a different shelf.
- Check to see if there is a layer of ice blocking the vent, as well. If so, remove by gently chipping it away and checking the temperature of the appliance.

## Refrigerator Is Understocked

Mass (food) within the refrigerator helps to maintain coolness. Understocked fridges can have temperature issues and need to work harder to maintain cool temperatures. Well-stocked (but not overstocked) fridges have sufficient mass to retain those cool temperatures.

### How To Fix It:

- Keep your refrigerator about three-quarters full of food and beverages to allow the air to circulate properly.
- In a pinch, put a couple of pitchers of water in the empty corners of your fridge to give your appliance something more to keep cool.
- Don't overstuff your fridge because items need air circulation to keep properly cooled, as well.

### Door Gaskets Are Faulty and Need Replacement

If you have cleaned the door gaskets but they still do not seal correctly, it's time to replace the gaskets entirely. They could be too old and brittle. To confirm, close your refrigerator with a dollar bill in the door, then pull the bill to see if it comes out easily. If you have to give the bill a slight tug to release it, your gaskets are okay. If the bill slips out way too easily, your gaskets are in need of replacement. To save money, this can be a do-it-yourself project.

### How To Fix It:

- Look for universal and brand-specific door gaskets online for between \$35 and \$100 for your fix.
- Soak the new gasket in hot water for a few minutes to make it more pliable for installation.
- Loosen and remove the old gasket (you may need to remove screws in the process).
- Lay the new gasket in place per instructions.

### Refrigerator Is Out of Level

Refrigerators should be close to level for them to work properly. If your refrigerator isn't level, the doors may not close or the door switch may not work correctly, which means the appliance won't cool down your food.

### How To Fix It:

- Use a bubble or laser level to check levels.
- From side to side, the fridge should be perfectly level.



- From front to back, though, the fridge should tilt 1/4-inch toward the back to allow the doors to shut properly.

## Clearances Are Not Maintained

The refrigerator should have enough clearance on the sides and especially in the back for air circulation to cool properly.

### *How To Fix It:*

- Check your instructions for details on tolerances. The tolerances depend on your brand of refrigerator.
- Generally, you'll need at least 3/8-inch on the sides.
- You'll need at least 1-inch tolerance in the back.
- After sliding the unit back in place, be sure to reset the anti-tip brackets located at the lower two front corners of the unit.

## Location Is Affecting the Cooling Capacity

If the refrigerator is placed in a warm or cold environment, such as outdoors or in a garage, this can affect the unit's cooling capacity. A garage that's too cold will confuse the fridge and it won't cool down its contents. If the garage is hot, the fridge will work overtime to cool down the interior.

Even when the fridge is located in a temperate environment, hot appliances such as dishwashers, ranges, or ovens adjacent to the fridge can affect the fridge's cooling.

### *How To Fix It:*

- To protect the fridge from the stove's heat, attach a heat-insulating material to the wall of the refrigerator
- Use your kitchen fan when cooking to reduce the heat in the kitchen.
- Surround the refrigerator in a customized box to separate the appliance from other hot appliances. This is also a solution for a fridge located in a garage with extreme temperatures.

## Electric Supply Is Faulty

Sometimes the simplest thing is causing the problem: the plug. Maybe the fridge isn't plugged in or the plug is loose. If the light in the fridge doesn't come on and it's not

cold inside, this could be the issue. If the fridge is cold inside but there's no light, then that's likely a burned-out bulb.

### How To Fix It:

- Make sure that your refrigerator's electrical plug is tight and solid in the outlet.
- Check the outlet type. Refrigerators should not be plugged into GFCI outlets as the GFCI may shut off power to the fridge.

## **IV. Refrigerator Leaking Water? 9 Easy Steps To Fix It**



### Find a Refrigeration Repair Company

A leaky fridge is something you can't ignore because any potential water damage is going to cost you more in repairs to your floor and more. Fortunately, diagnosing a leaking fridge is easy if you know where to look. The answer can be as simple as leveling a refrigerator or unmelting clogged lines. You just need to know how to access those lines. To learn how to fix a leaky fridge, you can start by learning what commonly causes one.

### How to Fix a Leaky Fridge

#### 1. Check Water Supply Line

Fridge leaks are the result of leaky water supply lines and/or inlet valves. Check your water supply line if you notice poor ice making or a poor flow with your water dispenser. Before you further, unplug the refrigerator and find a place to store your perishables.

Pull your fridge out from the walls and search for the plastic hose that connects your ice maker and water filter. If there's water dripping from the hose, replace it, because

that's the source of the leak. If you fix it yourself, turn off the water supply before replacing the hose.

## 2. Check the Level of the Fridge

Another quick fix is checking the levelness of the fridge. Water can spill out of a drain pan if the fridge isn't level. Level it by making it level from side to side and tilted to the back. Use a level to make sure the bubble is in the middle.

You can also make the fridge level by raising or lowering the adjustment screws. To access the screws, you'll need to pull off the front cover grille.

## 3. Check Drain Pan for Damage

Occasionally, a broken drain pan will lead to leaks because water that typically evaporates in the pan slips through a crack. The drain pan is located under your refrigerator and usually has some water in it, so don't be worried if there is some when you pull it out.

## 4. Check Defrost Drain

The defrost drain is typically located at the back of a freezer and can get easily blocked due to having a stuffed freezer. When that drain gets blocked, the coils start working harder and that can lead to condensation building up. That condensation will fall to the floor and form a puddle. To remedy it, rearrange your freezer so the drain is no longer blocked. Then flush warm water through the drain to clear any clogs.



## 5. Inspect Ice Maker

The inlet tube that goes to the ice maker can also be a source for a leaky fridge if it becomes clogged. First, unplug your fridge before removing the ice maker. To take a look at it, unscrew the screws, then unplug the wiring harness. Grab a hairdryer to melt any ice in the inlet tube until water stops dripping from the tube.

## 6. Inlet Valve

The inlet valve is located at the back of your fridge and turns water on and off to the ice maker. To see if the inlet valve is the issue, turn off the water at the saddle valve, typically located in the basement under your fridge, and disconnect the supply tube.

Hold the tube over a bucket and have someone turn on the saddle valve. If the water flows from the tube, the inlet valve is probably shot. To fix the inlet valve, unscrew the cover panel and unscrew the screws that keep the valve in place. Next, unplug the wiring and unfasten the nuts that connect the water lines. Then, to place the new valve, repeat the steps in reverse.

If you notice a leak at the inlet valve, fix it by tightening the compression nuts. If it looks like it's coming from the tube, it's time to replace the tube.

## 7. Water Dispenser

If the water dispensing is dripping water, trapped air in the water line could be the cause. This can cause a build-up of pressure which is forcing some water to escape through the opening of the dispenser. If this happens, you should try continuity purging water through the water dispenser for at least three minutes.

## 8. Evaporator Fan Motor

A faulty evaporator fan motor can prevent a freezer from getting cold enough, which might start causing leaks. The evaporator fan motor is usually located in the freezer. It can get blocked easily by debris that falls behind it or through a collection of dust bunnies.

When that happens condensation can build on the coils and begin dripping water on the floor. You can clean the coils with a long brush.

## 9. Door Seals

Believe it or not, but a freezer door that doesn't seal properly can lead to leaks, should the freezer reach melting temperatures. Check your door gaskets and seals for cracks and tears. If you find them, you'll need to replace the gaskets.



## When to Call a Pro

Even if you've checked all the usual suspects, it may come down to something electrical. Or the actual problem could lie in something like a compressor start relay or refrigerator not cooling, which might be beyond your DIY skills. Call a pro when you've exhausted all other causes of the leak. It's also important to know when to purchase a new refrigerator if yours has finally kicked the bucket.

## **V. How To Deep Clean Your Fridge Like A Pro**

Your fridge is one of the most frequently used appliances in your kitchen. However, it doesn't get cleaned as frequently as other appliances. People usually avoid cleaning because they find it difficult and time-consuming, but avoiding the task for too long can be a mistake. A dirty fridge can promote the growth of bacteria, which is one of the factors that lead to foodborne illness and other health issues. Therefore, you need to find out ways to clean the fridge perfectly.



If you want to clean the appliance professionally, contact professionals who offer the best end of lease cleaning Canberra. Hiring the cleaners is highly recommended at the end of lease period, and they are capable of cleaning different appliances with perfection. To carry out the task on your own, you must have the knowledge of the correct method.

Read on to know about how to deep clean your fridge like a pro.

### Prepare For Cleaning

Before you begin cleaning of your fridge, you must gather all the products essential to get the job done perfectly. It will make the task a bit easier and quicker for you. You will need the following things to clean the appliance:

- Microfibre Duster
- Paper towels
- Warm Water
- Baking Soda
- Hydrogen Peroxide

## Unplug Your Fridge

The first thing you need to do is to ensure your safety. So, switch off the fridge and unplug it. By doing it, you can prevent the chance of getting an electric shock during the cleaning. Keeping the door of the fridge open is also a waste of energy, so turn off the power. To clean it from all the sides, slide the fridge away from the wall. It will allow you to remove the dust layer from the top, back, sides and bottom of the fridge.

## Empty The Fridge & Freezer Entirely

You must take out all of the food items that you have in the fridge and keep them aside. You cannot clean the inside of the appliance with things in it. It is acceptable to keep your food item on the countertop or table for less than two hours at room temperature. So, remove everything so you can reach the backs of the shelves and drawer bottoms. Allow the freezer to defrost. The fridge is one of the tricky household objects to clean, so you can always take the help of professionals.

## Get Rid Of The Expired Food

As you take the food items from your fridge, check the packet to see when it expires. Throw it away if it has passed the specified date because it can make your fridge smell. Open up any food items with no dates or leftovers and give them a quick sniff. They are not fit for consumption if they have a sour or strong smell.



## Remove The Spills And Stains

You need to remove the spill and stains from the surfaces. Use a wet paper towel or microfiber cloth with warm water to perform the task. From the shelves and drawers to the walls of the fridge, wipe all the surfaces with a towel to remove the residue on them.

To remove stubborn stains, you can also use a plastic knife. Finally, collect the solid waste and toss them in your trash. It can be a time-consuming task that requires some elbow grease. So, if you want to get the best result without making an effort, then you need to hire end of lease cleaning in Canberra.

## Wipe With Baking Soda Solution

Once you are done removing the stains and spills, it is time to clean the dirt layer from the surface. Combine 1 or 2 tablespoons of baking soda with 1 litre of warm water inside a bowl. Dip a microfiber towel in the solution, wring it and wipe down the surfaces inside your fridge as well as freezer. Pay attention to seals around the fridge doors, walls, shelves, etc.

After that, remove the baking soda residue with a cloth saturated in plain water. Always remember that baking soda is one of the natural cleaners for the whole house.

## Sanitise Your Fridge With Hydrogen Peroxide

After cleaning the fridge, you should sanitise it. The best way to do it is by using hydrogen peroxide. Pour it into a spray bottle and add an equal amount of water to it. Shake it well and spray on the surface. Wait for a few minutes and then wipe with a clean cloth.

## Clean Outside Of The Fridge

After cleaning the inside of the appliance, close the door. Then take a microfibre duster to remove the dust layer from the top and sides of the fridge. You can use a broom to clean the back of the appliance. After that, spray homemade all-purpose cleaner on the surface and wipe with a cloth.

Deep cleaning your fridge like a pro doesn't have to be a challenging task. You just need to follow the step-by-step method mentioned above.

If you want to avoid the stress and hassles involved in fridge cleaning, contact professionals who offer reliable end of lease cleaning in Canberra. They will clean the fridge in the best possible manner, which will ensure the safety of the food in your fridge, so you will remain healthy.



## VI. How to clean refrigerator coils and keep your appliance running efficiently

You may never have even thought about cleaning refrigerator coils but this isn't a task to be forgotten. Easily done and essential to keep your fridge freezer in tip-top condition.



Wondering how to clean refrigerator coils? Or maybe you've never heard about cleaning them at all and are intrigued by why anyone would need to do it? We promise you that after finding out a bit more about fridge coils, you'll be rushing to clean yours as soon as possible.

While most people know how to clean the fridge inside, fridge component parts usually don't get much love. We get it: the thought of cleaning fridge coils is not the most exciting in the world and you may be very tempted to just skip the task altogether. However, there are compelling reasons why you shouldn't.

### Why do i need to clean refrigerator coils?

Far from being an obscure cleaning task you can safely ignore, cleaning refrigerator coils at least occasionally is essential if you want your best fridge freezer to run



efficiently and not break down before its time. Lana Chere, Director of Operations of Home Alliance, explains that 'The refrigerator coils or condenser coils are responsible for the heat extraction process that allows the refrigerant to circulate.

Thus, when the coils are covered with dirt, they require more energy and effort to release heat affecting the optimum performance of the refrigerator, especially the cooling system. This leads to having problems with freezing your ice for chill', to say nothing of raising your utility bills unnecessarily.

Has this made you want to clean your fridge coils right away? Here's what you'll need to do:

### 1. Clear out and disconnect the fridge

This may seem obvious, but you should never attempt to clean your fridge coils if the fridge is still on and has food in it. Not only is this an electric hazard, but also you'll potentially end up ruining the food with the coil cleaning solution.

Coil cleaning doesn't take a very long time, but you will need to let everything dry out before plugging the fridge back in, so you will need to do a bit of forward planning for food that's perishable.

### 2. Locate the coils

You've removed the food and disconnected your appliance. Now, you will need to locate your fridge coils. Depending on the age, make, and model of your fridge, your fridge coils may be located:

- On the outside of the fridge at the back
- Underneath the fridge
- Inside the fridge behind a panel

If the coils aren't obviously exposed, they will be behind a panel inside. You may find it easier to find the manual to be certain. Ray Charles, a heating and air conditioning professional, and the Founder of Household Air([opens in new tab](#)), advises that 'If you need to clean coils that are inside the refrigerator, you'll need to take the back panel off and check for exposed coils. If there are no exposed coils, you can apply the coil cleaner on the backside of the refrigerator.'

### 3. Brush off or vacuum lint buildup and debris

Always begin by removing the obvious dirt, clumps of dust, and other debris that will have built up over the months (or years!) Chere recommends using 'a soft-bristled brush or coil brush to remove the clog from the coils – dust, debris, and sometimes

hair from the pet and the owner. The small-nozzle vacuum is a perfect partner for the job, especially on the corners and narrow areas.'

#### 4. Saturate the coils with coil cleaner

In many cases, the dry clean part of the process will be enough. However, if there is still visible dirt on your coils and vacuuming or brushing just isn't doing it, it's time to reach for a dedicated coil cleaner. Charles advises that 'you need to saturate the coils with the cleaner and wait until it stops bubbling. It's important to use a solution that melts through the gunk and refreshes the metal coils. You can use a wild solution, but they can be really harsh and damage the metal coils. It is better to go for a commercial refrigerator coil cleaner'.

#### 5. Wash off the solution

Charles recommends using a power washer 'to remove any remaining cleaner from the coils'. This is much more effective than trying to rinse off the cleaner manually, although you will need to think about the water spray from your pressure washer. We recommend lining anything in your kitchen you don't want to get sprayed with old towels.

#### 6. Let the coils dry

When you are done cleaning, Charles recommends setting the refrigerator 'to the coldest setting, and allowing it to run for a few hours. This will help the coils to dry out.' Once the coils are dry, you can put the food back in.

### Can i clean refrigerator coils with vinegar?

Yes. vinegar is a great solution if you don't have a commercial coil cleaner, and no power washer. Charles recommends the following process:

#### 1. Spray on the vinegar

Using a spray bottle(opens in new tab), spray vinegar(opens in new tab) on the coils. Then, you simply let it sit for about 10 minutes. The vinegar will remove any residue (such as calcium and lime) that has accumulated on the coils and line, and can even restore their natural shine and luster. If you have a bit more time, you can mix a 50/50 ratio of vinegar with water and then use a scrubbing brush to remove any stubborn residue.

#### 2. Wipe off

Once it's sat, wipe off the vinegar gently with an old cloth. After you've finished, let the refrigerator sit for a few hours to dry out.

### 3. Leave the door open

Now, leave the door open for the remaining vinegar to evaporate.

Top tip: 'Do not place food in the refrigerator while cleaning. Acetic acid (the active ingredient in vinegar) may cause damage to certain plastics. I recommend you not use vinegar on any plastics. The vinegar smell will eventually dissipate, but it's still recommended to open a window or two to air it out'.

### How often do i need to clean refrigerator coils?

Chere highly recommends cleaning the coils every six months. If you really can't be bothered, annually is ok.

## CONCLUSION

Spending a few minutes once every few days and regular maintenance will help the refrigerator run efficiently and save you from sudden breakdowns and related services costs. In this pdf, we have teach the top ten tips to maintain a refrigerator.

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