How to keep your wheelie bin clean and help prevent flies and maggots

The life cycle of the common housefly has four stages, egg, larva (maggot), pupa and adult fly. Adult female flies will lay their eggs on any organic material, which will provide suitable food for the maggots, when they emerge. Each female fly can lay up to 500 eggs in batches of 75 to 150 in three to four days and in the summer during warm weather, these eggs can hatch into maggots within eight to twenty hours. The fly can complete the whole cycle in as little as seven days and as many as 12 generations may occur in one summer.

If you spot a fly in the kitchen there is a good chance that the fly has already laid its eggs on any organic food that has been left out in the open. It is a scientific fact that you will not get maggots without flies, so it is a matter of good basic housekeeping and hygiene in the home to minimise the problem.

Your bin is an excellent food source and breeding ground for flies, but there are many things you can do to help prevent attracting flies.

Prevention is the best cure, so below is a list of tips on how to avoid attracting flies to your bin and decreasing your chances of getting maggots.

- **Do not leave any food waste, including pet food, uncovered inside the house, as it will attract flies and wasps, which can lay eggs on it before it goes in the bin.**
- **Sort and separate your waste from your recycling as you go, so you can put the waste into your wheelie bin, or sack, quickly. You may find it more convenient to have two small kitchen bins, one for recycling and one for kitchen waste that cannot be recycled, which needs to be emptied frequently.**
- **Double bag food waste such as meat and bones and squeeze the air out of the bags before they are tied and put into the bin. The lack of air in the bags should slow down decomposition, which will reduce smells and slow down the development of any eggs that may have been laid in the waste. Remember carrier bags have air holes to prevent suffocation so it may be best to use swing or pedal bin liners.**
- **If possible try to keep the bin in a shady area and out of direct sunshine, as the sun will warm up the bin and increase the smell, which will attract flies. Store your bins away from open windows and doors if possible.**
- **Maggots will only appear in the bin if the eggs have been laid in a suitable food source for them to develop. If bin lids are kept closed, flies should not be able to enter to lay their eggs. Therefore, if maggots do appear, the eggs are likely to have been laid before the food was put in the wheelie bin, especially if it wasn’t wrapped before being put in the bin. If the bin lid is broken or does not shut properly contact the Council on: 0300 330 7000 to arrange a replacement.**
- **If you dispose of pet faeces in your bin, clear up regularly after your pet and double wrap it before putting it in the bin. If you put disposable nappies in the bin then they also need to be double wrapped.**
- **Some essential oils, such as citronella and tea tree oil are natural insect repellents. Try smearing your bin lid with one of these oils if flies are a problem.**
- **To help prevent flies in the bin a fly catcher strip can be used or a fly spray, but always take care to follow the manufacturer’s instructions.**
- **When the bin has been emptied, check to ensure there isn’t any rubbish left in the bottom. Rinse it out regularly to keep it clean and use a disinfectant if you wish. One way of keeping the bottom of the bin clean is to place scrunched up balls of newspaper at the bottom with flat sheets of newspaper on top, then put your rubbish in. The paper soaks up any liquids that may escape from the bags.**

Some of these tips can be used by those who are on green sack collections.
If you do get maggots in your wheelie bin, most will be removed when it is emptied, however, maggots and flies eggs can be killed using boiled water and a mild detergent with a fragrance. This will also help to keep flies away from your bin until it is next emptied. Once it has been emptied the bin will need to be washed out thoroughly to ensure all the eggs and maggots have been killed. Please make sure you are careful when using hot water and ensure that any residual water in the bottom of the bin is emptied out before you put any rubbish in it.

You can reduce the amount of kitchen waste going into your bin by composting your vegetables and fruit waste at home. Consider purchasing a food digester and you will also be able to compost meat and bones. For more information on this and how to purchase a composting unit at a discounted price please contact the Council on: 0300 330 7000.

If you have children in nappies have you considered using real reusable nappies. Loan kits are available via the NBC libraries at Hunsbury and Weston Favel. The scheme is supported by the Northamptonshire Waste Partnership

Northampton babies helped to keep more than one and a half million nappies out of landfill sites last year by using real cotton nappies instead of disposable ones.

Did you know - Nearly 8000 babies are born in Northamptonshire every year? Approximately one tonne of disposable nappies per baby are thrown away every year. The first disposables are still slowly rotting away in landfill sites around Northamptonshire - The plastic in the nappies may never rot away completely - In a household with a baby up to 50% of their household rubbish could be disposable nappies. Every year councils in the UK spend at least £40 million disposing of disposable nappies.

You are responsible for the amount of waste that you produce. The Council will provide you with a waste receptacle for your non-recyclable materials, everything else that is permitted to be recycled, needs to be placed in your recycling boxes or clear carrier bags if you prefer. Do not use black sacks for recycling, as the collection crews will not pick these up.

If on occasions you produce more waste than normal and you cannot dispose of it within your standard waste container (bag/bin), then Northamptonshire County Council provides two Household Waste Recycling Centres for you to dispose/recycle of it there.

Recycling reduces the amount of waste that goes to landfill, which in turn helps reduce the effects of climate change. Old landfill sites produce and release methane gas into the atmosphere and harmful liquids called leachate into rivers and streams. Landfill sites can also be an eyesore. What would you rather see.....

This Or This

There is no need to build or continue to use all of the UK’s landfill sites if we recycle everything we can!

Did you know that to date there is no evidence of any known adverse health effects as a result of a twin bin collection service. Wheelie bins are much better for protecting the contents from attacks by cats, dog’s foxes, crows and rats, etc.