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Hot water at your fingertips

ENERGY SENSE | Dispenser has small, insulated hot water tank under countertop

BY JAMES DULLEY

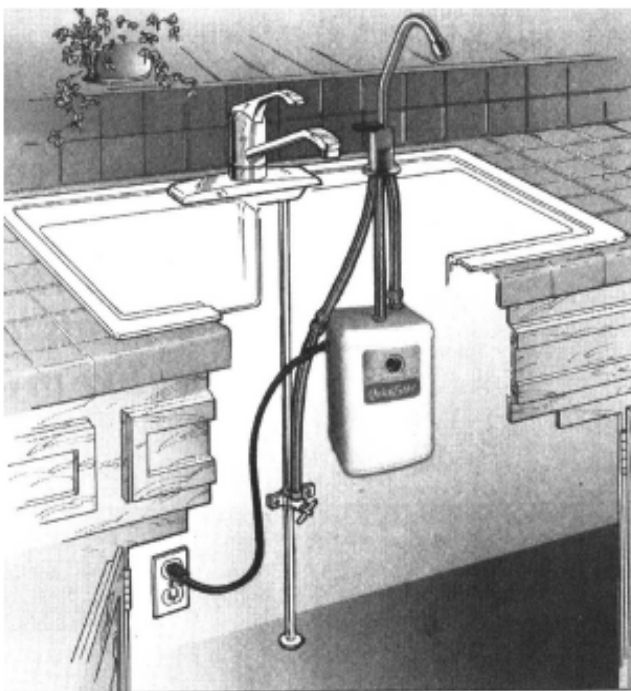
Q. *We drink quite a bit of hot tea at our home year-round. I now keep a small electric pot of water hot all day. Would it be more energy efficient to install a sink-type hot water dispenser?*

A. Keeping a small electric pot of water hot all day is not the most energy efficient method for making tea. During the winter, the heat lost from the pot helps to heat the house, but the electric resistance element is expensive to operate.

During the summer, this pot of hot water is a triple loss. First, it uses electricity to heat the water. Second, your air conditioner must run more to remove this heat from the house. Third, the hot water gives off humidity to the room which makes the air conditioner run even longer.

A sink-mounted hot water dispenser is a much more efficient method to get hot water instantly for tea or coffee. There also are many other uses for the instant hot water such as warming baby food, cleaning cheese or butter off a knife, etc. Running a little hot water over a new jar often makes it easier to break open the seal on the lid.

A hot water dispenser is different from an instant water heater which heats the cold water as it is used. Instead, a hot water dispenser has a small, highly insulated hot water tank



This is a schematic of how a hot water dispenser is mounted and plumbed in a typical kitchen. This model is available with a push-on or twist-on faucet. | PHOTO COURTESY ANAHEIM MANUFACTURING

under the countertop. In effect, it is an efficient mini-water heater in the kitchen. With its insulated tank, very little heat is lost to the kitchen so less electricity is consumed.

A typical hot water dispenser can heat enough hot water for about 50 cups each hour. This is more than most families will ever use. For better tasting water,

some models include optional water filters. Another option is a countertop model which uses bottled water and it may also include a chiller for cold water.

You should be able to install a hot water dispenser yourself because it operates on just standard 120-volt electricity. The most difficult part of the installation process is making a new

hole in the countertop. Depending upon your needs, the water temperature can usually be set between 140 and 190 degrees. The lower temperature settings are ideal for cleaning tasks.

If you have children who can reach the hot water dispenser handle, select a model with a child resistant push button. A typical design requires a 90-degree turn of the button to switch it from the locked-off position. Even 140-degree water can scald skin in seconds, so always lock it.

Hot water can leach lead from pipe solder joints, so all the water paths in hot water dispensers are lead-free. When steaming rice or boiling vegetables on the stove, it is safe to start with heated water from the dispenser. This will save energy overall.

The following companies make hot water dispensers:
Anaheim Manufacturing, (800) 854-3229, www.anaheimmfg.com.
Elkay, (630) 574-8484, www.elkay.com.

Franke, (800) 626-5771, www.frankeksd.com.
In-Sink-Erator, (800) 558-5700 www.insinkerator.com.
Tri Palm International, (800) 646-2747, www.oasiswatercoolers.com.

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