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At home

An occasional look at what's new and noteworthy

KITCHEN

Want a self-cleaning kitchen? Of quartz!

First, homeowners want their kitchens to function well. And they want them to look cool and sophisticated. Now, in these germ-phobic times, they want them to fight bacteria, too.

Beginning next spring, Cosentino's Silestone natural quartz kitchen countertops will have antimicrobial properties — meaning, the countertops resist bacteria. Using Microban International's technology, the countertops are made by bonding a microbe-resistant agent to the crystal quartz.

"Homeowners want the cleanest home possible with the least amount of maintenance," says Gina Covell, spokeswoman for Cosentino. Since quartz, unlike granite, is non-porous, it already has properties that inhibit bacteria. "This will go a step further by providing a continuous antimicrobial cleaning action that inhibits growth of bacteria, mold and mildew that cause stains and odors."

Silestone prices range from \$45 to \$95 per square foot installed, or a little more than the most expensive plastic counters and less than the low end of granite counters. They'll be available at Home Depot and various kitchen and bath dealers.

Also on the market: Samsung refrigerators come with Nano-SilverSeal, a silver-based coating underneath the interior lining that helps suppress the spread of bacteria on surfaces and in the air. And Fellowes, which makes electronics accessories, has introduced computer keyboards, mice and mouse pads that resist microbes using the Microban technology.

— Maria Puente



Intuitive counter: Silestone is scratch-, stain-, heat- and scorch-resistant.