

Why are my glasses cloudy at the end of the dishwasher cycle?

Soak a cloudy glass in undiluted white vinegar for several minutes then rinse and dry. If the cloudy condition is removed, you have hard-water deposits. If it remains the glass has been etched.

Etching is a permanent pitting of the glass surface. It begins with rainbow coloring when the glass is held to the light and advances to a cloudy appearance. Once glassware is etched it cannot be restored. The cost of the glassware does not determine if it will etch.

Etching can be caused by using too much detergent for the level of water hardness in your home. If you have a water softener, it is usually good to use only three teaspoons of detergent per detergent cup. (see chart below) When water is softened, the minerals that were in the water are removed. Detergent requires minerals, oil, and food to break it down. If it doesn't break down the dishwasher acts as a sandblaster, blasting grains of detergent onto your glassware at high speeds leaving the glass pitted. Manually pre-rinsing dishes to the extent of removing all food soils adds to this condition. Using the pots and pans cycle when only light/china is needed exposes the dishes to longer cycles and can increase etching. Incoming water from the faucet needs to be between 120-140 degrees F. Lower water temperatures won't dissolve the detergent leaving more detergent to etch your dishes.

Water spotting has several causes. If too much detergent is being used it may be left behind in the rinse water and it may be depositing on the dishes. The water temperature may be too low. Run the hot water at the sink to purge the water line of cold water. (Your dishwasher takes hot water from the kitchen sink water line) Hotter water dissolves the soap better for more complete rinsing.

Rinse-aid should always be used to improve drying performance. Rinse-aid is dispensed in the final rinse to improve the water sheeting action. This allows the water to slide off the dishes more easily. This results in less spotting. If the water temperature is too high, flash-drying can occur. This is when the water evaporates off faster than it can sheet. Adjust the water temperature at your water heater so that the incoming water is between 120-140 degrees F. In a nutshell, use the right amount of detergent for your water hardness (Always use a high-quality detergent such as Cascade powder.), always use rinse-aid, run the hot water at the sink first, make sure your water temperature is in the correct range, leave some sauces and oils on the dishes when loading, and you should end up with spot free dishes.

Water Hardness Detergent Use

Soft (0-3 Grains) 3 tsp.

Medium (4-9 Grains) 4-9 tsp.

Hard (10-13 Grains) 10-12 tsp.

Very Hard (Over 14 Grains) Very difficult to achieve good wash results

Note: To determine the water hardness in your area, you can order a water hardness test kit (part number 038184 Retail \$49.95) from a local appliance parts store, or you can contact your local water utility or state university extension service.