

NEW BRUNSWICK KITCHENS

Kitchen Maintenance

Caring for countertops, cabinets, appliances, and finishes to extend the life of your kitchen renovation

12 Expert Answers from Kitchen IQ

newbrunswickkitchens.com/construction-brain

Table of Contents

1. What does annual kitchen plumbing maintenance cost in New Brunswick, including P-trap inspection, shut-off valve testing, and supply line checks?
2. What is the cost to flush and maintain a water heater that supplies kitchen hot water in New Brunswick, and how does it affect energy bills?
3. How do I maintain quartz countertops in my NB kitchen?
4. How often should I clean and condition wood kitchen cabinets?
5. What is the best way to clean grout on a kitchen backsplash?
6. How do I prevent water damage under the kitchen sink in NB?
7. What maintenance do granite countertops need in NB's climate?
8. How do I care for butcher block countertops in a NB kitchen?
9. When should I reseal my natural stone kitchen countertops?
10. How do I fix a chip in my quartz or granite countertop?
11. How do I prevent mold behind kitchen cabinets in NB's humid climate?
12. How do I deal with kitchen cabinet moisture and condensation in NB winters?

What does annual kitchen plumbing maintenance cost in New Brunswick, including P-trap inspection, shut-off valve testing, and supply line checks?

Annual kitchen plumbing maintenance in New Brunswick typically costs \$150-\$300 for a comprehensive service call that includes P-trap cleaning, shut-off valve testing, and supply line inspection. Most NB plumbers charge \$120-\$180 for the service call plus \$30-\$120 for any minor repairs or parts replacement.

Comprehensive Kitchen Plumbing Maintenance

A thorough annual kitchen plumbing check should include P-trap removal and cleaning (\$20-\$40 in labour), testing all shut-off valves under the sink to ensure they turn freely and seal properly, inspecting supply lines for signs of wear or mineral buildup, checking the garbage disposal connection if present, and testing water pressure at the kitchen faucet. Many NB plumbers offer this as a flat-rate service for \$150-\$200, which is more cost-effective than calling for individual issues throughout the year.

New Brunswick-Specific Considerations

NB's hard water in many areas (especially well water) causes mineral buildup in supply lines and around shut-off valves, making annual maintenance particularly important. The Maritime humidity can also cause corrosion on older galvanized supply lines common in pre-1980 homes. During winter months, pipes near exterior walls in older NB homes are vulnerable to freezing, so maintenance should include checking insulation around supply lines. Many NB homes still have the original galvanized shut-off valves from the 1960s-1980s that can seize up if not exercised annually.

What's Included vs Extra Costs

The base maintenance fee covers inspection, testing, and minor cleaning. However, replacing corroded shut-off valves adds \$80-\$150 per valve, new supply lines cost \$60-\$120 each, and P-trap replacement runs \$40-\$80. If your home has the older compression-style shut-off valves common in NB, budget an extra \$100-\$200 every few years for replacements as they wear out faster than modern quarter-turn valves.

Timing and Prevention

Schedule kitchen plumbing maintenance in late fall before winter, when most NB plumbers have better availability than during the busy spring season. This timing also ensures your kitchen plumbing is ready for the heavy holiday cooking season. Regular maintenance prevents emergency calls that cost \$200-\$400 in NB, especially during evenings and weekends when emergency rates apply.

DIY vs Professional Service

While homeowners can visually inspect supply lines and test shut-off valves, P-trap cleaning requires disconnecting plumbing connections that can leak if not properly reassembled. Given that kitchen water damage can cost thousands to repair, the \$150-\$300 annual investment in professional maintenance is worthwhile insurance for most NB homeowners.

Need help finding a qualified plumber for kitchen maintenance? New Brunswick Kitchens can connect you with local plumbing professionals through the New Brunswick Construction Network.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Gionetterenovations
- Thirty Four Renovations

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q2

What is the cost to flush and maintain a water heater that supplies kitchen hot water in New Brunswick, and how does it affect energy bills?

Water heater flushing typically costs \$150-\$300 when done by a professional plumber in New Brunswick, though many homeowners can handle this maintenance task themselves for just the cost of time and water.

Water heater maintenance directly impacts your kitchen's hot water performance and energy costs. In New Brunswick's hard water areas (particularly around Moncton and Saint John), sediment buildup reduces efficiency by 10-15% annually if left unchecked. This translates to \$50-\$150 extra per year on your energy bills for an average household.

Professional vs DIY maintenance depends on your comfort level and water heater type. Electric water heaters are straightforward to flush — turn off power, attach a garden hose to the drain valve, and flush until water runs clear (typically 15-30 minutes). Gas units require more caution around the pilot light and venting. Most NB plumbers charge \$150-\$200 for a basic flush and inspection, or \$250-\$300 if they're replacing the anode rod simultaneously.

New Brunswick's water conditions make regular maintenance especially important. Well water often contains iron and minerals that accelerate sediment buildup, while municipal water in older areas may have higher mineral

content. Coastal communities deal with salt air affecting external components. The Maritime climate's humidity can also cause exterior corrosion on water heater tanks and connections.

Energy bill impact varies by fuel type and usage. A poorly maintained electric water heater (common in NB apartments and newer homes) can see 20-25% efficiency loss over 3-4 years without flushing. Propane units (popular in rural NB) are less affected by sediment but benefit from annual maintenance. Natural gas units (mainly in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John) fall somewhere between.

Timing and frequency matter in New Brunswick's renovation season. Schedule water heater maintenance in fall before heating season begins, when plumbers have better availability and rates may be 10-15% lower than summer peak season. Most manufacturers recommend annual flushing, but NB's hard water conditions often require every 6-8 months for optimal performance.

Kitchen renovation connection: If you're planning a kitchen remodel, have your water heater inspected first. Units over 8-10 years old may struggle to supply adequate hot water for a new dishwasher, larger sink, or additional prep areas. Upgrading to a tankless system (\$2,500-\$4,500 installed) during renovation can free up basement space and provide unlimited hot water for your new kitchen.

Red flags requiring professional attention include rusty water, strange noises, or water temperature fluctuations. These indicate potential anode rod failure or internal corrosion that goes beyond basic maintenance.

Need help finding a qualified plumber for water heater maintenance? The New Brunswick Construction Network can connect you with local professionals who understand Maritime water conditions and energy efficiency requirements.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Gionetterenovations
- Thirty Four Renovations

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q3

How do I maintain quartz countertops in my NB kitchen?

Quartz countertops are one of the lowest-maintenance surfaces you can install in a New Brunswick kitchen — daily cleaning with warm water, a drop of dish soap, and a soft cloth is all you need for routine care.

Unlike granite, quartz is non-porous and never requires sealing, which makes it an excellent choice for NB's Maritime climate where humidity fluctuates significantly between summer and winter.

For everyday cleaning, wipe down your quartz surfaces with a damp microfibre cloth and a small amount of mild dish soap. Rinse with clean water and dry with a soft towel to avoid water spots, especially if you have a darker colour like charcoal or deep brown where mineral deposits from NB's harder water show more readily. Avoid abrasive cleaners, scouring pads, and anything containing bleach or ammonia — these can dull the surface finish over time.

For tougher stains — dried food, coffee rings, or sauce splatters — make a paste of baking soda and water, apply it to the stain, let it sit for 5-10 minutes, then gently wipe away with a soft cloth. For grease buildup near the stove, a non-abrasive degreaser formulated for stone surfaces works well. Always rinse thoroughly after using any cleaning product.

Protecting Your Investment

Heat is quartz's biggest enemy. Despite being engineered stone, quartz contains resin binders that can scorch, discolour, or crack under sudden high heat. Never place a hot pot, pan, or baking sheet directly on quartz — always use trivets or hot pads. This is especially important in NB kitchens during winter when your countertop surface temperature may be cooler, creating a larger thermal shock when contact with a hot vessel occurs.

Avoid harsh chemicals including oven cleaners, paint strippers, and permanent markers. If you spill something acidic — vinegar, lemon juice, or tomato sauce — wipe it up promptly. While quartz is far more stain-resistant than natural stone, prolonged contact with highly pigmented or acidic substances can occasionally cause discolouration on lighter colours.

Use cutting boards rather than cutting directly on quartz. While quartz is hard enough that most knives will not scratch it, the surface can dull your knife blades quickly, and heavy chopping can chip edges over time.

New Brunswick's winter humidity swings (indoor levels dropping to 15-25% with forced-air heating) do not affect quartz the way they affect natural stone or butcher block, which is one of its key advantages in our climate. Quartz will not crack, warp, or require seasonal resealing regardless of humidity levels. At \$60-\$120 per square foot installed, quartz countertops last 15-25 years with virtually no maintenance beyond simple cleaning — making them the most popular countertop choice in NB kitchen renovations today.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Gionetterenovations
- Thirty Four Renovations

[View all contractors ?](#)

How often should I clean and condition wood kitchen cabinets?

Clean your wood kitchen cabinets with a gentle cleaner every 1-2 weeks and apply a conditioning treatment every 3-6 months to keep them looking their best in New Brunswick's challenging climate. NB's dramatic humidity swings — from 70-80% relative humidity in summer to as low as 15-25% indoors during winter with forced-air heating — make regular conditioning especially important for solid wood cabinet doors.

For routine cleaning, use a soft microfibre cloth dampened with warm water and a few drops of mild dish soap. Wipe in the direction of the wood grain, then follow with a dry cloth to remove all moisture. Pay extra attention to the areas around handles and pulls, where oils from your hands build up, and the cabinet doors nearest the stove, where grease and cooking residue accumulate fastest. For stubborn grease, a solution of one part white vinegar to two parts warm water works well — just be sure to dry the surface immediately afterward, as standing moisture is wood's worst enemy.

Conditioning is where NB homeowners need to pay closer attention than the national average. When your furnace runs steadily from November through March, indoor humidity plummets. Dry air pulls moisture out of solid wood, causing doors to shrink slightly, which can lead to cracking, splitting at joints, and finish checking (fine hairline cracks in the finish). Applying a quality wood conditioner or furniture polish with natural oils (look for products containing lemon oil, tung oil, or mineral oil) every 3-4 months during the heating season helps maintain the wood's moisture balance. In summer, when Maritime humidity is high, you can stretch conditioning intervals to every 5-6 months.

Avoid silicone-based polishes, as they create a buildup that becomes gummy over time and can interfere with future refinishing. Also avoid anything with ammonia, bleach, or harsh abrasives — these strip the finish and dry out the wood faster.

Seasonal Deep Cleaning

Twice a year — ideally in spring and fall when you are transitioning between heating and cooling seasons — give your cabinets a thorough deep clean. Remove everything from inside, wipe down interior shelves, and clean cabinet exteriors top to bottom. Check under the sink for any signs of moisture intrusion, which is common in NB kitchens where older plumbing connections may develop slow leaks. Inspect hinges and tighten any loose screws, as seasonal wood movement can loosen hardware.

If your cabinets are MDF-core with a painted finish (the most popular mid-range choice in NB kitchens because MDF does not expand and contract like solid wood), you can skip the conditioning step entirely — just clean with a damp cloth and mild soap. MDF painted cabinets handle NB's humidity swings better than solid wood or thermofoil,

which is one reason kitchen renovators in Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John increasingly recommend them.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- [Thirty Four Renovations](#)
- [Gionetterenovations](#)

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q5

What is the best way to clean grout on a kitchen backsplash?

The best way to clean kitchen backsplash grout is with a paste of baking soda and water applied with a soft-bristle brush, left to sit for 10-15 minutes, then scrubbed gently and rinsed clean. This approach is effective for routine grout cleaning without damaging the grout or your tile, and it is safe for the ceramic, porcelain, and glass tile backsplashes that are most common in New Brunswick kitchens.

Mix about three parts baking soda to one part water to form a thick paste. Spread it along the grout lines with an old toothbrush or a grout brush (available at any hardware store in NB for about \$5-\$8). Let the paste sit for 10-15 minutes so the baking soda can break down the grease, soap residue, and cooking splatter that discolour grout over time. Then scrub in small circular motions and wipe clean with a damp cloth. For kitchen backsplashes, the grout lines directly behind the stove and near the sink take the most abuse, so focus your effort there.

For heavier staining — yellowed grout, mold spots, or deeply embedded grease — mix equal parts baking soda and hydrogen peroxide (the 3% solution from the pharmacy) into a paste and apply the same way. The peroxide provides extra oxidizing power that lifts stains baking soda alone cannot. Leave it on for 15-20 minutes, scrub, and rinse. This combination works particularly well on white and light-coloured grout.

New Brunswick's Maritime humidity makes grout maintenance more important than in drier climates. During NB's humid summers, moisture can encourage mold growth in grout lines, especially in kitchens with poor ventilation or where the range hood is set to recirculate rather than vent outside. If you see black or dark green spots in your grout, that is likely mold — the baking soda and hydrogen peroxide method handles it well, but you should also address the underlying moisture issue by running your range hood (vented to the exterior) while cooking and for 10-15 minutes afterward.

Avoid bleach-based cleaners on coloured grout, as bleach can strip the colour. Also avoid steel wool, wire brushes, or acidic cleaners (vinegar, in large concentrations) on grout — these can erode the grout surface and create more porous texture that stains more easily in the future.

If your grout is badly stained despite cleaning, consider applying a grout sealer after a thorough deep clean. Sealed grout resists staining and moisture penetration far better than unsealed grout, which is especially valuable in NB's humid kitchen environments. Grout sealer is a simple DIY project — apply with a small brush along grout lines, wipe excess off tiles, and let cure for 24-48 hours. A bottle of quality grout sealer costs \$15-\$25 and covers most standard kitchen backsplash areas of 25-40 square feet. Reapply once a year for best results.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Gionetterenovations
- Thirty Four Renovations

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q6

How do I prevent water damage under the kitchen sink in NB?

Preventing water damage under the kitchen sink starts with regular inspection of supply lines and drain connections, a quality shelf liner, and immediate attention to any signs of moisture. Under-sink water damage is one of the most common and costly kitchen problems in New Brunswick, where many homes have aging plumbing, and where Maritime humidity makes mold growth especially aggressive once a leak begins.

Inspect your under-sink plumbing every 2-3 months. Open the cabinet doors, remove cleaning supplies, and look carefully at the supply lines running to the faucet, the P-trap, the drain connections, and the dishwasher drain hose if applicable. Run the faucet for a minute and watch every connection for drips. Feel the supply lines — braided stainless steel supply lines are preferred because rubber hoses degrade over time and are the number one cause of catastrophic under-sink flooding. If your NB home still has the original rubber supply hoses from when it was built, replace them immediately — this is a \$15-\$30 DIY task that prevents thousands in water damage.

Many older NB homes (built in the 1960s through 1980s) have galvanized drain pipes that corrode from the inside, creating pinhole leaks that go unnoticed until significant damage has occurred. If you see flaking, green-white crust,

or damp spots on drain pipes during your inspection, have a plumber assess them. Replacing corroded drain plumbing under a kitchen sink typically costs \$300-\$800 and is far cheaper than repairing water-damaged cabinets and flooring.

Protective Measures

Install a waterproof shelf liner on the bottom of the sink cabinet. A thick rubber or silicone mat catches small drips and contains them before they soak into the cabinet floor. These cost \$10-\$20 and are one of the cheapest insurance policies for your kitchen. Replace the liner if it shows signs of persistent moisture.

Consider a leak detector. Battery-powered water sensors placed under the sink sound an alarm when they detect moisture — they cost \$15-\$30 and can alert you to a slow leak days or weeks before visible damage appears. Smart leak detectors that send phone notifications are available for \$30-\$60 and are worth the investment if you travel or have a vacation property in NB.

Ensure proper ventilation in the under-sink area. In NB's humid summers, a closed, dark cabinet with any moisture at all becomes a mold incubator. If your cabinet does not have adequate airflow, leave the doors open periodically to air it out, especially during July and August when humidity peaks. If you already see mold or mildew, clean with a solution of one part white vinegar to one part water, dry completely, and address the moisture source before it spreads to surrounding cabinets or flooring.

If your kitchen sits on a concrete slab (common in some NB ranch-style homes), water damage under the sink can wick into flooring and along the subfloor without obvious surface signs. This is another reason waterproof flooring like LVP (\$2,000-\$4,000 for a kitchen) has become the top choice in NB kitchen renovations. If you notice persistent dampness, soft spots in cabinet floors, or a musty smell under any kitchen sink, have a professional assess the situation before it becomes a much larger problem.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- [Thirty Four Renovations](#)
- [Gionetterenovations](#)

[View all contractors ?](#)

What maintenance do granite countertops need in NB's climate?

Granite countertops in New Brunswick require sealing once a year, daily cleaning with a pH-neutral stone cleaner, and extra attention to moisture management because of NB's significant humidity swings between summer and winter. Granite is a natural stone with microscopic pores, and without proper sealing, it absorbs liquids, stains, and — in NB's humid Maritime summers — can harbour bacteria and even mold in unsealed areas near the sink.

Annual sealing is the most important maintenance task. A quality impregnating granite sealer fills the stone's pores and creates a barrier against stains and moisture without changing the surface appearance. The process is straightforward: clean the countertop thoroughly, apply the sealer evenly with a soft cloth, let it absorb for the time specified on the product (usually 15-20 minutes), wipe away excess, and allow 24 hours to cure before using the surface. One bottle of professional-grade granite sealer costs \$20-\$40 and covers a standard kitchen's worth of countertop. The best time to reseal in NB is early fall — after the humid summer and before the dry heating season begins — so the stone enters winter with maximum protection.

To check whether your granite needs resealing, drop a small amount of water on the surface. If it beads up, the seal is intact. If the water darkens the stone and absorbs within a few minutes, it is time to reseal. Some lighter-coloured granites and more porous varieties may need sealing every 6 months rather than annually.

For daily cleaning, use warm water with a pH-neutral stone cleaner or a few drops of mild dish soap. Wipe with a soft cloth or microfibre towel. Avoid acidic cleaners (vinegar, lemon-based products, and most bathroom cleaners) because acid etches granite's polished surface over time, leaving dull spots. Similarly, avoid ammonia-based glass cleaners and any product containing bleach.

NB Climate Considerations

New Brunswick's climate affects granite in ways that homeowners in more temperate regions do not experience. During winter, forced-air heating drops indoor humidity to 15-25%, which can cause the caulk joints between your granite countertop and the backsplash wall to dry out and shrink, creating gaps where moisture can penetrate. Inspect these joints each spring and reapply kitchen-and-bath silicone caulk if you see cracking or separation — a \$10 tube of caulk prevents water from seeping behind the countertop and damaging the wall or cabinet tops.

In summer, when NB humidity climbs to 70-80%, moisture can condense on cooler granite surfaces, especially near exterior walls. Wipe down condensation promptly, and ensure your kitchen has adequate ventilation — a range hood that vents to the outside is essential.

Protect the surface daily by using cutting boards (granite dulls knives, and knife marks can chip the surface), trivets for hot pots (granite handles heat well but thermal shock can cause hairline cracks), and coasters under bottles of oil, wine, or citrus juice. Address spills of coffee, red wine, tomato sauce, or cooking oil immediately — blot rather than wipe to avoid spreading the stain. At \$55-\$110 per square foot installed, granite is a significant investment that rewards consistent care with decades of beauty and durability.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Gionetterenovations
- Thirty Four Renovations

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q8

How do I care for butcher block countertops in a NB kitchen?

Butcher block countertops require regular oiling every 3 to 6 months and consistent moisture management — especially critical in New Brunswick where seasonal humidity swings between maritime summers and dry heated winters put extra stress on natural wood surfaces. Without proper care, butcher block in NB kitchens can crack during winter when indoor humidity drops to 15-25%, then swell and warp during humid summer months.

The single most important maintenance task is oiling. Use a food-safe mineral oil or a butcher block conditioner (a blend of mineral oil and beeswax) and apply it generously to the entire surface, including the underside and edges. Let the oil soak in for several hours or overnight, then wipe off any excess. New countertops should be oiled weekly for the first month to build up a protective barrier, then every 3 to 6 months after that. In New Brunswick, aim for the shorter end of that schedule — oil every 3 months — because the extreme dryness from forced-air heating during November through March pulls moisture out of the wood aggressively. If water no longer beads on the surface, it is overdue for oiling.

Daily Care and Cleaning

Clean butcher block daily with a damp cloth and mild dish soap, then dry it immediately. Never let water pool on the surface, and never soak it. Avoid harsh cleaners, bleach, or abrasive pads — these strip the oil finish and damage

the wood grain. For disinfecting, wipe with a solution of one tablespoon white vinegar per cup of water, then dry thoroughly. If you use the countertop as a cutting surface, sanitize it periodically with coarse salt and half a lemon, scrubbing in the direction of the grain.

Dealing with NB's Humidity Swings

New Brunswick's climate is the biggest challenge for butcher block. During winter, consider running a humidifier in your kitchen to keep indoor humidity between 35-45%, which protects both your wood countertops and your cabinets. In summer, ensure your kitchen has good ventilation — run your range hood when cooking and avoid leaving wet cloths on the countertop surface. Position butcher block away from the sink and dishwasher whenever possible. If your countertop is directly adjacent to the sink, seal the end grain near the sink with several extra coats of oil or use a waterproof end-grain sealer.

For scratches and minor surface damage, sand the affected area with 220-grit sandpaper in the direction of the grain, then re-oil. Deeper scratches or stains may require sanding with 150-grit first, followed by 220-grit. One advantage of butcher block over quartz or granite is that you can refinish it yourself — sand the entire surface down and re-oil for a like-new appearance.

If you notice any dark spots or mildew forming, especially after NB's humid summers, sand the area down past the discoloration and apply a fresh coat of oil. Persistent mould or deep black staining may require a diluted hydrogen peroxide treatment before sanding. Warping or significant cracking from seasonal movement is harder to fix — if end-grain joints are opening up or the surface has cupped noticeably, a professional refinishing or replacement may be needed. Many NB homeowners ultimately install butcher block on a kitchen island rather than perimeter countertops, keeping it away from the moisture-heavy sink zone while still enjoying the warmth and character of natural wood.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Gionetterenovations
- Thirty Four Renovations

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q9

When should I reseal my natural stone kitchen countertops?

Most granite and natural stone kitchen countertops should be resealed once per year, though NB's humid maritime summers and dry heated winters can accelerate wear on sealant, making twice-yearly sealing a smart practice for high-use kitchens. The simple water test tells you exactly when resealing is due: pour a small amount of water on the surface and wait 10 to 15 minutes. If the water beads up, the seal is intact. If it soaks in and darkens the stone, it is time to reseal.

Different natural stones have different sealing needs. **Granite** is the most common natural stone countertop in New Brunswick kitchens and typically needs sealing every 12 months. Darker granites like Absolute Black are denser and may only need sealing every 18 to 24 months, while lighter, more porous granites like Kashmir White may need it every 6 months. **Marble** is far more porous than granite and should be sealed every 6 months — though marble is rarely recommended for kitchen countertops in NB due to its susceptibility to etching from acidic foods. **Soapstone** does not need sealing at all but benefits from periodic mineral oil applications for an even patina.

How to Reseal

Resealing is a straightforward DIY task that takes about an hour plus drying time. Clean the countertop thoroughly with a stone-safe cleaner — avoid vinegar, lemon, or bleach-based products that can damage natural stone. Let the surface dry completely. Apply a quality impregnating stone sealer (available at most Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John home improvement stores for \$15-\$30 per bottle) using a clean cloth or foam applicator, working in small sections. Let the sealer absorb for 15 to 20 minutes, then wipe away any excess with a dry cloth. Allow 24 hours of curing time before using the countertop normally. Most sealers require two coats for optimal protection.

New Brunswick's climate creates specific challenges for natural stone. During humid summer months, moisture can work its way into unsealed stone, promoting bacteria growth and staining around the sink area. In winter, the extreme temperature difference between a cold exterior wall and warm kitchen air can cause condensation near window-adjacent countertops — another reason to keep that seal in good condition. If your granite was installed near an exterior wall in an older NB home with limited insulation, pay extra attention to sealing the edges and backsplash joint where moisture can wick in.

For granite countertops installed at \$55-\$110 per square foot, the \$15-\$30 annual cost of a bottle of sealer is minimal insurance to protect your investment. If you are unsure about your stone type or the right sealing schedule, ask the fabricator who installed your countertops — most countertop fabricators in the Moncton, Fredericton, and Saint John areas will provide guidance on care specific to your stone variety.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- [Thirty Four Renovations](#)
- [Gionetterenovations](#)

[View all contractors ?](#)

How do I fix a chip in my quartz or granite countertop?

Small chips in quartz or granite countertops can often be repaired with a colour-matched epoxy or resin kit, costing \$15 to \$50 for a DIY fix, though larger chips or cracks near edges may require professional repair at \$150 to \$400. The approach differs between the two materials, but both are repairable without replacing the entire slab in most cases.

For **granite** chips, clean the damaged area thoroughly with acetone or rubbing alcohol and let it dry completely. Apply a clear or colour-matched epoxy or super glue (cyanoacrylate) to fill the chip, building it up slightly above the surface. Let it cure for 24 hours, then carefully shave the excess with a razor blade held flat against the surface. Finish by polishing the area with a granite polishing compound. For dark granites, clear epoxy works well. For lighter stones with visible grain, a colour-matched granite repair kit gives better results — these are available online for \$20-\$40 and include tinted epoxy that you can blend to match.

Quartz chip repair follows a similar process, but quartz repair kits are specifically formulated for engineered stone. Clean the chip with rubbing alcohol, apply colour-matched acrylic adhesive or epoxy from a quartz repair kit, allow it to cure, then level with a razor blade and buff smooth. Because quartz has a more uniform colour pattern than granite, colour matching is usually easier, and small repairs tend to blend in well.

When to Call a Professional

DIY repair works well for chips smaller than a loonie (roughly 25mm across) that are on the flat surface of the countertop. However, certain situations call for professional help. Edge chips larger than a quarter, cracks that run along the surface, chips near the sink cutout where water exposure is constant, and damage along seams all warrant a professional stone repair technician. Professional countertop repair in New Brunswick typically runs \$150 to \$400 depending on the severity and the technician's travel distance — most repair specialists are based in Moncton, Fredericton, or Saint John, so rural locations may see higher service call fees.

To prevent chips in the first place, avoid dropping heavy objects like cast iron pans onto the countertop edges, which is where most chips occur. Use cutting boards rather than cutting directly on the surface — while quartz and granite resist scratching, hard impacts on edges and corners cause chipping. In NB kitchens where heavy winter cooking is common — cast iron stews, roasting pans, and the like — be particularly careful when handling heavy cookware around countertop edges.

If your countertop has a chip near a high-moisture area like the sink, repair it promptly. In New Brunswick's humid summer climate, water penetrating through a chip in granite can cause staining beneath the surface that becomes much harder to fix later. For quartz, water intrusion through chips is less of a concern since quartz is non-porous,

but the chip itself will collect grime and become more noticeable over time if left unrepaired.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- Gionetterenovations
- Thirty Four Renovations

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q11

How do I prevent mold behind kitchen cabinets in NB's humid climate?

Preventing mold behind kitchen cabinets in New Brunswick starts with controlling moisture at the source — proper ventilation, vapour barriers on exterior walls, and ensuring cabinets are not installed tight against cold, damp surfaces. NB's Maritime humidity from June through September creates ideal conditions for mold growth in the dark, stagnant air spaces behind and underneath kitchen cabinets, especially on exterior walls.

The **number one defense** is a properly functioning range hood that vents to the outside. Cooking generates enormous amounts of moisture — boiling a pot of water releases litres of steam into your kitchen air. Recirculating range hoods filter grease but do nothing for moisture. In NB's already-humid summers, a recirculating hood allows that moisture to settle behind cabinets, on window frames, and in ceiling corners. When renovating, always install a range hood ducted to the exterior with a minimum 400 CFM rating for a standard residential kitchen. Budget \$300 to \$1,200 for the hood plus \$200 to \$600 for ductwork installation.

Exterior wall preparation is critical before hanging cabinets. In many older NB homes built in the 1960s through 1980s, exterior kitchen walls have insufficient insulation and no vapour barrier. During a renovation, when walls are opened up, your contractor should install proper vapour barrier (6-mil polyethylene) on the warm side of the insulation, upgrade insulation to current code standards, and seal all penetrations with acoustical sealant. This prevents warm, humid indoor air from reaching the cold wall surface behind cabinets where condensation forms — the classic recipe for mold.

If your renovation does not involve opening the walls, have your contractor apply a **mold-resistant primer** (like Zinsser Mold Killing Primer) to the wall surface behind all cabinet locations before installation. This does not solve the underlying moisture issue, but it provides a chemical barrier that inhibits mold growth on the painted surface.

Cabinet Installation Best Practices

Leave a **small air gap** (even 1/4 inch) between the back of base cabinets and the wall where possible, particularly on exterior walls. This allows minimal air circulation that discourages mold colonization. Your installer can achieve this with shims at mounting points. Under-sink cabinets are the highest-risk area because they combine plumbing moisture with the enclosed dark space that mold loves. Use a moisture-resistant cabinet material under the sink, check regularly for slow leaks, and consider a smart water leak sensor (\$30 to \$50) that alerts your phone at the first sign of dripping.

Ventilate your kitchen daily, even in winter. NB's heated winter air drops to 15 to 25 percent relative humidity indoors, which actually helps prevent mold in winter months. The risk period is late spring through early fall when outdoor humidity climbs and you are cooking with windows closed on rainy days. Running your range hood for 15 minutes after cooking and using a bathroom-style exhaust fan if your kitchen has one makes a meaningful difference.

During your renovation, ask your contractor about **mold-resistant drywall** (like DensArmor Plus) for the wall areas behind cabinets and around the sink. It costs slightly more than standard drywall but provides lasting protection in NB's climate. If mold is discovered behind existing cabinets during demolition, have it professionally remediated before new cabinets go in — painting over mold does not kill it. Find kitchen renovation contractors experienced with NB's moisture challenges through the New Brunswick Construction Network.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- [Thirty Four Renovations](#)
- [Gionetterenovations](#)

[View all contractors ?](#)

Q12

How do I deal with kitchen cabinet moisture and condensation in NB winters?

Cabinet moisture and condensation during New Brunswick winters is caused by the dramatic humidity contrast between cold exterior walls and warm interior air, and it's one of the most common kitchen complaints in Maritime homes — especially in cabinets mounted on exterior walls or under sinks. Left

unchecked, this moisture leads to mold growth, swollen cabinet boxes, delaminating door finishes, and musty odours that are difficult to eliminate.

The root cause is simple physics. During NB winters, exterior wall surfaces inside your kitchen can drop to 5 to 10 degrees Celsius even while the room feels warm. When warm, moisture-laden kitchen air — generated by cooking, dishwashing, and boiling water — contacts these cold surfaces inside or behind your cabinets, the moisture condenses into water droplets. Older NB homes built in the 1960s through 1980s typically have minimal wall insulation (R-8 to R-12 versus the modern code requirement of R-24) and poor or no vapour barriers, making this condensation problem significantly worse.

Ventilation is your first line of defence. Run your range hood every time you cook, and make sure it's vented to the exterior — not recirculating. A recirculating hood filters grease but puts all the cooking moisture right back into your kitchen. In NB's cold winters, some homeowners avoid running exhaust fans because of the cold air infiltration, but the cost of a little heat loss is far less than the cost of mold remediation and cabinet replacement. If your kitchen doesn't have a properly vented range hood, adding one should be a priority.

Controlling indoor humidity is equally important. During NB heating season (October through April), ideal indoor relative humidity is 30 to 40 percent. Many NB homes with older heating systems or poor air sealing run much higher than this, especially if they use humidifiers. A simple hygrometer (\$15 to \$30 at any hardware store) lets you monitor levels. If humidity consistently exceeds 40 percent in winter, reduce humidifier output, run bathroom fans during and after showers, and ensure your dryer vents to the exterior.

Fixing Existing Cabinet Moisture Problems

For cabinets on exterior walls showing condensation, check the **wall insulation** behind them. During a renovation, it's worth pulling the cabinets to add insulation and install a proper 6-mil polyethylene vapour barrier. This is one of the best investments you can make in an NB kitchen — it costs \$500 to \$1,500 depending on the wall area and eliminates the condensation problem at its source. If renovation isn't in the budget right now, you can improve airflow behind cabinets by shimming them slightly off the wall (6 mm is enough) to allow air circulation.

Under-sink cabinets are particularly vulnerable because the plumbing penetrations through the wall and floor create cold air paths. Seal around all pipes with expanding foam or caulking, and check supply lines and drain traps for sweating — insulating cold water pipes with foam pipe insulation (\$1 to \$2 per foot) stops them from dripping condensation into the cabinet.

For cabinets that have already developed **mold**, clean affected surfaces with a solution of one part white vinegar to one part water, let it dry completely, and apply a mold-resistant primer before repainting. If the mold has penetrated MDF or particleboard cabinet boxes, those sections may need replacement — MDF swells permanently when

saturated and cannot be restored. This is one reason solid plywood cabinet boxes, while more expensive, perform better in NB's climate over the long term. If you're planning a kitchen renovation, choosing plywood-box cabinets with painted MDF doors gives you the best moisture resistance for New Brunswick conditions.

Looking for experienced contractors? The New Brunswick Construction Network connects homeowners with qualified professionals:

- [Thirty Four Renovations](#)
- [Gionetterenovations](#)

[View all contractors ?](#)

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by New Brunswick Kitchens. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any kitchen renovation project. Information is current as of April 5, 2026 and may change. Visit newbrunswickkitchens.com for the latest answers.