



CleaningMatters

Tips and Trends from the American Cleaning InstituteSM

January/February 2011

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Calendar of Clean

January is ...

- **National Hobby Month**
(see Cleaning Up After Crafts)
- **National Book Month**
(see All Booked Up)
- **New Year's Day: Jan. 1**
(see Clean Ideas)
- **Martin Luther King Day: Jan. 17**
(see Clean Ideas)

February is ...

- **National Children's Dental Health Month**
(see Ask Nancy)
- **National Wise Health Consumer Month**
(see Clean Ideas)
- **Super Bowl Sunday: Feb. 6**
(see Ask Nancy)
- **Valentine's Day: Feb. 14**
(see Cleaning Up After Crafts)

Hand Washing on the Rise

New Survey Shows We're Getting Better at Handwashing

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), proper and frequent handwashing is the number one way to prevent the spread of cold and flu germs. For the past several years, organizations like the American Cleaning Institute[®] (ACI), the American Society for Microbiology (ASM) and the CDC have aggressively promoted the benefits of handwashing to the media and the general public. It looks like these efforts are really beginning to pay off.

A recent observational study jointly sponsored by ACI and ASM revealed that 85% of adults washed their hands in public restrooms, compared with 77% in 2007. The 85% total was actually the highest observed since these studies began in 1996. The results were announced in August at the Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy, an infectious disease meeting sponsored by ASM.

In a separate telephone survey, 96% of adults said they always wash their hands in public restrooms, a percentage that has remained relatively constant over the years. A majority of those interviewed (89%) said they always washed their hands after using the bathroom at home.

How the Observational Study Was Conducted

On behalf of ASM and ACI, Harris Interactive discreetly observed 6,028 adults in public restrooms to note if people washed their hands. Researchers returned to six locations in four cities where two previous studies were conducted: Atlanta (Turner Field), Chicago (Museum of Science and Industry, Shedd Aquarium), New York City (Grand Central Station, Penn Station), and San Francisco (Ferry Terminal Farmers Market).



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Hand Washing on the Rise (cont.)

New Survey Shows We're Getting Better at Handwashing

How We Did

When it comes to handwashing diligence, the women outdo the men. The rate of women washing their hands in public restrooms improved from 88% in 2007 to 93% in 2010. Men, on the other hand, did better than in previous studies but, depending on the venue, they sometimes strike out. More than three-quarters of the men (77%) washed their hands publicly in 2010, compared to 66% in 2007. At sporting venues (i.e. Chicago's Turner Field), barely two-thirds (65%) of the men washed their hands. On the other hand (pun intended), Turner Field brought out the best in women's handwashing among all venues: 98%.

What We Learned

"The message is that people are getting the message," says Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute. "Between mom's common sense advice and the recent pandemic scare, people now seem to realize the importance of when and how you wash your hands."

More Americans now report that they always wash their hands after changing a diaper (82%), an increase from 2007 (73%). Women are better than men at this practice: 88% of the women say they always wash their hands after diaper duty, compared to 80% of the men.

There is still room for improvement. In the telephone survey, those who said they always clean their hands before handling or eating food is staying about the same: 77% in 2010, compared to 78% in 2007. Among women, 83% said they clean their hands before touching their food; just 71% of men say they do. And, only 39% of Americans say they always wash their hands after coughing or sneezing.

What to Do

We should all be vigilant handwashers - both for our own health and for the health of those around us. Here's how to do it properly:

- Wet hands with warm running water. Then apply soap.
- Rub hands together vigorously to make a lather and scrub all surfaces. Continue for 20 seconds, which is about how long it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.
- Rinse well under warm, running water.
- Dry hands thoroughly using paper towels or an air dryer. If possible, use paper towels to turn off the faucet.

And if you're anywhere soap and water are out of reach, hand sanitizers or hand wipes are good alternatives for keeping your hands clean.



NewsFlash

Support Poison Prevention Week

Plan Now to Be on Board in March

March 20-26, 2011 is National Poison Prevention Week. The goal is to build public awareness of the dangers posed by common toxins. In 2007, 2.5 million people were exposed to poisons and almost 1.3 million of those exposures occurred in children five years or younger. In the same year, almost 860,000 adults (20 years and older) called Poison Centers.

This observance is sponsored by the Poison Prevention Week Council, which is comprised of more than 20 national organizations, including the American Cleaning Institute®, with an interest in and commitment to programs aimed at preventing unintentional poisonings. The Council’s website (www.poisonprevention.org) has downloadable materials, including posters, and links to materials from various Council members.

The Council is also sponsoring a contest for its 2012 poster. This contest has three divisions: kindergarten through 2nd grade; 3rd through 5th grade; and 6th through 8th grade. The themes of the poster contest are *Children Act Fast, So Do Poisons and Poisonings Span a Lifetime*. Although the submission deadline is June 1, 2011, creating posters during Poison Prevention Week is the perfect way to get kids involved.

If you are interested in participating in a poison prevention event, contact your local poison control center by calling the nationwide toll-free number, 800-222-1222, and asking to speak with a poison prevention educator.

If you are interested in hosting a poison prevention event, the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has a National Poison Prevention Week Event Planner available at <http://poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/what-can-you-do/national-poison-prevention-week/index.html>.



Sign Up for Email Alerts

New Website Feature

 You may have noticed a new little blue envelope icon at the bottom of the website pages or a box under the left navigation panel where you can enter your email address. This new feature gives you the option to receive email alerts from the American Cleaning Institute® when there is new information on our website. You can choose which news, events and/or videos that interested you. You can also choose the format and frequency of the email messages. Click the blue envelope or “sign up” button or go to www.cleaninginstitute.org/signup.aspx to sign up! When a new item in your selection is added to the website, you will receive an email with a link to the item(s).

What's New in the Laundry Room

Convenience, Performance and Sustainability Drive New Innovations

Ultra-concentrated products and products that contain stain-release ingredients are the big news in laundry detergents.

More Power to 'Em

While concentrated laundry detergents have existed in either powdered or liquid form since the 1960s, today's innovations take them to a whole new cleaning level.

Concentrated (or ultra) detergents are available in liquid, powder and gel forms. They come in smaller packages, yet are designed to offer the same cleaning power as regular detergents in larger packages. New formulations can be 2X, 4X or even 6X as concentrated as their predecessors.

Increased cleaning power per dosage makes it even more important to follow label instructions and use the measuring cap or scoop that comes with the product. Using more detergent than necessary doesn't make your clothes any cleaner. In fact, the opposite is often true: too much detergent can leave a residue on clothes that fades colors and attracts more dirt. It can create a high froth inside the machine that lifts soil and lint above the water level so it isn't properly rinsed away. To help consumers use the correct amount, detergent manufacturers are introducing innovations such as new dosage caps with more-defined measurement lines inside and bigger numbers that are staggered, not stacked.

Two-in-One Products

Combination soil and stain removal products offer the convenience of using one product in place of two. Look for detergents with built-in stain removers that can tackle specific stain groups and/or supplement their ability to fight stains with other ingredients.

Boosters

When an extra stain-fighting nudge is needed, in-wash stain removal boosters can be added to the laundry along with your regular detergent. These boosters come in several forms—powder, liquid or single dosage packs—so you can choose the version that suits your laundry preferences. They also come in scented and unscented versions.

Sustainability

In addition to added convenience and performance, Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®, points out that laundry product innovations demonstrate the industry's commitment to the principles of sustainability.

- **Waste reduction:** Smaller containers use less paper and plastic, which means less packaging to recycle or dispose of and less impact on the environment.
- **Energy conservation:** Smaller containers mean that less fuel is needed to ship these products to retailers. This helps control greenhouse gases and other emissions.
- **Water conservation:** Concentrated products use less water in product formulation, which means reduced use of this precious resource.
- **Consumer convenience:** Smaller, lighter containers are easier to carry and store at home.

Safe at Home

Understanding Disinfectants

Just because a surface looks clean, that's no guarantee that it doesn't harbor germs warns Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®. Regular cleaning products do a good job of removing soil but only disinfectants or disinfectant cleaners (also known as antibacterial cleaners) kill the germs that can cause many illnesses.

Household disinfectants and antibacterial household cleaning products are formulated to kill a wide variety of microorganisms that can live on inanimate surfaces, such as the bacteria *Salmonella* and *E. coli*, which cause

intestinal illness, and *Staphylococcus*, which causes skin infections. The specific organisms a product kills depends on its active ingredients, specific formulation and use instructions.

Products that claim to kill germs must meet efficacy requirements and guidelines established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and must be registered with EPA and carry an EPA registration number on their label. Read and follow label directions at all times. Disinfectants and disinfectant cleaners are the only products that kill germs—but they only work *if* the label directions are followed.

All Booked Up

A Script for Sorting and Cleaning Books

While there's no doubt that e-readers are gaining in popularity, traditional books are still an important part of many households. Some are one-time reads; some are treasured resources. Some are merely decorative, while others are there for the enjoyment of turning the physical page.

During routine cleaning, bookshelves are usually subject to a cursory dusting—a pass with a dust rag, a flick of a duster and we're done. But if there are books you want to hold onto for a long time, proper cleaning will extend their life. Dust and dirt can abrade pages and bindings and attract insects. In addition, a dusty, dirty environment supports mold growth, which isn't good for the books or healthy for the humans around them, particularly if those humans suffer from asthma or allergies.

January is National Book Month—the perfect time to sort, donate, properly clean and store your books suggests Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®.

Gather Up Your Books—both those in bookcases and those that are scattered throughout the house. Separate the ones you no longer want, and donate them to a thrift shop or a library sale. For more ideas, type “where to donate used books” in your Internet search engine. One interesting site is BookCrossing.com, a site that encourages leaving a book in a public place to be picked up and read by others, who then do likewise. Books can be registered on the site (registration is free), so their travels can be tracked.

Clean the Books. Start with the dirtiest part of the book, which is usually the top. For a light accumulation of dust, use a magnetic dust cloth. For a heavy layer of dust, vacuum the books, using a soft brush attachment. If the books are very old, add a piece of cheese cloth between the end of the hose and the brush attachment. This will keep any loose binding fragments from being sucked into the vacuum. Whether vacuuming or dusting, hold the book firmly closed to prevent dirt from slipping in between the pages.

Clean the Shelves. Use the cleaning product best suited to the shelf material and the amount of dirt. If more than dusting is required, make sure that the shelves are thoroughly dry before the books are put back.



Cleaning Up After Crafts

How to Minimize the Mess Your Pint-Size Picassos Make

Kids love to create crafts. And the gloomy indoor days of winter are just right for adding some sparkle and shine to their projects. But glue and glitter, finger paints and markers, and all their other favorite art supplies can be stains just waiting to happen. Here are some hints to keep the mess away, courtesy of Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®.

Choose Wisely: Stock your craft closet with washable paints and markers and water-based craft glue. If any of the coloring mediums get on clothes, simply pretreat the stain with a prewash stain remover and toss the soiled items in the wash.

Glue Spills: On washable fabrics, scrape off the excess glue. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover and launder, using the hottest water that's safe for the fabric. For carpets or upholstery, scrape off the excess glue. Then use a carpet or upholstery cleaner, following the manufacturer's instructions. If the glue is not water-based craft glue, contact the glue manufacturer for stain removal recommendations.

Glitter Fallout: Depending on where the glitter lands, the two best ways of capturing errant sparkles are vacuuming them up or blotting them up using the sticky side of masking tape. If you own a hand-held vacuum, keep it nearby for instant glitter control.

Clean S.P.O.T.

Partnership for Food Safety Education

Quick test yourself with this question: Do you know the four core safe food handling messages that can help you and your family reduce the risk of food borne illness when preparing food at home?

A 1996 report, "*Putting the Food Handling Issue on the Table: the Pressing Need for Food Safety Education*," elevated the need for action on consumer food safety education, and led to a pledge of cooperation between government agencies, industry, and consumer groups for the development of a national food safety education campaign. The result was formation of the non-profit **Partnership for Food Safety Education** and launch in 1997 of the consumer-tested Fight BAC!® campaign and its actionable consumer messages.

Today the Partnership's base of engaged public and private organizations stands at 18, and its network of message amplifiers in communities across the country (BAC Fighters) has grown to more than 9,000. The Partnership leverages resources from public and private sectors like the American Cleaning Institute® to educate consumers online and to create downloads that educators use to teach others about the importance of safe food handling to good health.

The challenges in food safety education have evolved over the past 13 years, and the need to measure progress is critical. Through the leadership of its government partners from the US Food and Drug Administration and US Department of Agriculture, the Partnership is leading a strategic effort right now to review and refresh the science-based approach to actionable consumer messaging and to develop a multi-year national food safety education strategic plan that is based on stakeholder commitments to action.

Follow the strategic initiative through the Partnership's Facebook page and check out www.fightbac.org where you can sign up to receive weekly e-cards, and download consumer advice around those four messages that remain the basis of consumer food safety education: Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill! You remembered them, right? Make it a safe, fun, easy, tasty Holiday by visiting www.holidayfoodsafety.org.

For more information about the Partnership for Food Safety Education, email info@fightbac.org.



Ask Nancy Tell Nancy



Remember when you were in school and Show 'n Tell was a favorite classroom activity? Well, that's just what we'd like to do with this section of *Cleaning Matters*®. We'd love to hear more from you! Here's an acceptable place to air your dirty laundry . . . to tell others how you coaxed spots and stains from your favorite clothes. Do you have a funny story about what was left in the pockets? What lessons have your kids learned about doing their own laundry? You decide what's next! Send Nancy an email at education@cleaninginstitute.org and write "Tell Nancy a story" in the subject line.

Q: I've been concentrating on getting my young children to brush their teeth regularly. Unfortunately, they can't seem to accomplish this without getting toothpaste on their clothes. How do I remove the stains?

A: Pretreat the stain with a prewash stain remover and then launder, following the garment manufacturer's recommendations. Although toothpaste stains are easy to remove in the laundry, unlike some stains, sponging with cold water won't remove them. Once the toothpaste hits the clothes, the stain remains until the item is laundered. If you can convince your kids to wear one while brushing, a large bib or water-proof smock will help eliminate the problem.

Q: Every year, we host a Super Bowl party with chips and dip as a "must" on our menu. But in all the excitement, greasy potato chip stains are everywhere! How do I remove them, particularly from my upholstery?

A: On upholstery, use a clean white cloth and upholstery cleaner, following the manufacturer's directions. Test the product on an inconspicuous area before using. For grease stains on napkins, tablecloths and washable clothing, pretreat with a prewash stain remover and then launder in the hottest water that's safe for the fabric.

Nancy Bock is Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®



Clean Ideas Simple Steps to a Clean & Healthy New Year

Resolutions to Help Keep Everyone Healthy

Here are half a dozen ways to make 2011 a cleaner and healthier year for you and everyone around you.

- 1. Get a Flu Shot.** While flu season starts to peak in November, the heaviest months for flu are December through March. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for the antibodies that provide protection against influenza infection to develop in the body. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov) recommends that all Americans 6 months of age and older should get a flu shot each year.
- 2. Wash Your Hands.** According to the CDC, the single most important thing we can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness to others is to clean our hands. Critical handwashing times include:
 - Before *and* after preparing or eating food
 - Before *and* after tending to someone who is sick
 - Before *and* after treating a cut or wound
 - After using the toilet
 - After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
 - After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
 - After handling an animal or animal waste
 - After handling garbage
- 3. Spread the Word, Not the Germs.** Help others learn the importance of handwashing for good health. The American Cleaning Institute's *Hooray for Handwashing* materials can be used in nursery schools, day care centers and at home to teach pre-schoolers the importance of washing their hands. Posters, bookmarks and fact sheets are also available for use in work or school settings. Visit http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/hands_publications.aspx for an overview of materials that can be downloaded or ordered online.
- 4. Cover Your Coughs and Sneezes.** "Droplet spread" is a major culprit in spreading cold and flu germs. Cough or sneeze into a tissue, then throw it away. If there's no tissue in reach, bend your arm and cough or sneeze into your elbow. The idea is that people are less likely to touch each other's arms than each other's hands. But no matter what cover-up you use, promptly wash your hands.
- 5. Keep Food Preparation Surfaces Clean.** This includes countertops, cutting boards and utensils. Use the appropriate cleaning product for each surface to help remove bacteria that can cause foodborne illnesses. Use a disinfectant cleaning product to kill those bacteria. Clean these surfaces thoroughly and often.
- 6. Donate Handwashing Supplies.** The MLK Day of Service is a great way to celebrate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday on January 17th. The goal is to "Make It a Day On, Not a Day Off" by getting involved in community service that helps solve social problems and tangible needs. Homeless shelters and food banks are always in need of handwashing and cleaning supplies.

