



# CleaningMatters

Tips and Trends from the American Cleaning Institute®

May/June 2011

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## Calendar of Clean

### May is ...

- **National Allergy/Asthma Awareness Month**  
(see *Y Clean*)
- **National Pet Week: May 1-7**  
(see *Housecleaning with Fido and Friends*)
- **Mother's Day: May 8**  
(see *Special Delivery*)
- **Memorial Day: May 30**  
(see *Ask Nancy/Tell Nancy*)

### June is ...

- **National Bathroom Reading Month**  
(see *Clean Ideas*)
- **Adopt-a-Shelter-Cat Month**  
(see *Housecleaning with Fido and Friends*)
- **National Camping Month**  
(see *Ask Nancy/Tell Nancy*)
- **Father's Day: June 19**  
(see *Special Delivery*)
- **First Day of Summer: June 20**  
(see *Surviving Summer Storage*)

## Housecleaning with Fido and Friends

### *Cleaning Strategies When Pets Are in the Household*

If you are already a pet owner, you know that any month is a good month to celebrate your four-legged friends. But two organizations that are concerned with the welfare of animals have focused on May and June to remind the world at large about the benefits of having a faithful furry companion. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has designated May 1-7 as National Pet Week and the ASPCA has designated June as Adopt-a-Shelter-Cat month.

If you haven't already jumped on the pet bandwagon, why would you consider becoming a pet owner? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there are many health benefits. Having pets can help you decrease your blood pressure, as well as cholesterol levels and triglyceride levels, and alleviate feelings of loneliness. They also provide opportunities for socialization and, in the case of dogs, opportunities for exercise and outdoor activities.

Having a pet in the household could pose some special cleaning challenges, particularly if family members or friends suffer from asthma and allergies. Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®, offers some suggestions to keep things under control.

**Vacuum regularly to keep up with the pet hair.** An upright vacuum or a canister style with a power nozzle will pick up two-to-six times as much dust from a rug as canisters without a power nozzle. Be sure to move the pet to another space when you vacuum; otherwise, the noise may upset them. If possible, use a vacuum that has a HEPA filter and/or exhaust filter, or use a special bag that holds allergens inside.



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## Housecleaning with Fido and Friends

### *Cleaning Strategies When Pets Are in the Household*

**Brush your pet frequently.** This advice is not just for dog owners! Cats, particularly elderly ones who may have trouble grooming themselves, can also benefit from regular brushing. If possible, do it outside, away from those with allergies. When you are finished, wash your hands with soap and water.

**Pet-proof the environment.** Tuck electrical cords out of the way. Install safety latches in lower kitchen cabinets. Don't leave small items around that might be mistaken for chew toys. And don't leave any type of cleaning liquid out where pets might be tempted to take a drink.

**Wash pet food dishes daily.** They can be a magnet for ants and other crawly critters.

**Store dry food in a securely closed container.** This keeps out the bugs, exploring toddlers, and foraging pets.

**Keep bedding clean.** Choose a pet bed with washable, removable cushions to make cleaning easier. Dust mites love to eat pet dander, so consider dust mite covers for your pet's bedding.

**Protect the furniture.** Put a towel or a washable blanket or throw over your pet's favorite chair or corner of the sofa. Have multiple covers so that one is available while the other is in the wash. Change and wash the covers weekly.

**Keep the outdoors out.** Keeping cats indoors prolongs their lives and lessens the chance that they will bring you small wildlife as "presents" or drag in dirt and dust. But dogs, even city dogs, need to be walked outdoors. Keep a few old towels near the door. Teach them to wait until their feet are dried to remove rain, snow, mud or even the morning dew. In the winter, if you've walked your pet on salt-treated paths, keep a small pail of water handy to remove the salt from their feet.

**Be asthma-aware.** Many people are surprised to learn that it isn't the pet's hair itself that triggers an allergy or asthma attack. Rather, it's the interaction of pet hair, dander and saliva. Dander consists of tiny scales that shed from the pet's skin. During self-grooming, the pet's saliva causes the dander to stick to the hair. It is actually the protein in the saliva that is the true source of the asthma attack. If a family member has an allergic or asthmatic reaction to a pet, discuss the problem with both your physician and your veterinarian. Together, they may have some solutions to minimize the reaction.

## NewsFlash

### 2011 C.L.E.A.N.® Award Recipients

#### *Custodians Honored for Outstanding Leadership in School Cleanliness*

Custodians from five schools across the country were recently recognized with the third annual National C.L.E.A.N. (Custodial Leaders for Environmental Advocacy Nationwide) Award, a joint initiative of the American Cleaning Institute® and the National Education Association/NEA Health Information Network. The goal of this program is to recognize the contributions that custodians make to public health in their schools, communities and their profession.

The top recipient, Barry Crocker of Cobb County, Georgia's Nicholson Elementary School, received an all-expenses-paid trip to the NEA National ESP Conference, which was held in March in Washington, D.C., as well as a cash award. Barry, who has been head custodian at the school for more than 20 years, is part of the school's leadership team, which works with the principal and vice principal to make school-wide decisions, including those impacting cleanliness and safety. His cleaning practices are so effective that he's been asked by the Cobb County School District supervisor to assist and retrain custodians at other schools.

The four runners-up are the Durango High School Custodial Team (Rick Duran, Rich Warfield, Greg Butler and Chris Gregory), Durango, Colorado; Virginia Wilson, Orange Beach Elementary School, Foley, Alabama; Carol Stubbs, Anne Chestnut Year Round Middle School, Fayetteville, North Carolina; and Steve Verburg, Portage Central Elementary School District, Paw Paw, Michigan.



Applicants for the C.L.E.A.N. Award provided information on their worksite, their cleaning responsibilities, how they have demonstrated leadership for school cleanliness achievements, evidence of collaboration and how their work has enhanced the image of the custodian. Applications were evaluated on originality, creativity, ability to sustain results, evidence of teamwork, and program impact.

For additional information about the program and the year's award recipients, as well as information about the 2012 award, visit [http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean\\_living/custodians.aspx](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/custodians.aspx).



## Y Clean?

### *New Survey Shows Gen Y Supports Spring Cleaning*

If it's spring, Generation Y may very well be at home – cleaning!

According to the 2011 Spring Cleaning Survey from the American Cleaning Institute®, 82% of Generation Y men and women (our nation's 18-29 year olds) will engage in spring cleaning this year. That puts them well ahead of the national average as reported in ACI's 2010 Spring Cleaning Survey. Last year's survey reported that 59% of adults, regardless of age, had spring cleaning on their minds.

This year's independent research, conducted by Echo Research, showed that most (55%) Gen Y'ers have been living in their current location for less than two years. And, whether they live with a spouse or significant other, parents, other family or children, or part-time at home and part-time at school, what is consistent is the importance of having a clean living space. 96% of respondents reported that having a clean home is important to them.

27% of Generation Y respondents use spring-cleaning as a time to clean their home from head to toe. Their spring-cleaning priorities include bedrooms, kitchens, bathrooms, closets and floors.

#### **Gender Differences**

While the priorities rank in the same order for men and women, a greater number of women prioritize the importance of each job. 75% of women (versus 66%

of men) say that even just the change in the weather makes them want to clean up. Men are more highly motivated when their home starts to smell, they are told to clean or someone comments about their home's lack of cleanliness.

When it comes to cleaning, men and women don't always see eye to eye:

- 96% of women are likely to clean and disinfect countertops daily, compared to 86% of men.
- 96% percent of women are likely to clean the floors or carpet, versus 88% of men.
- 76% of women are motivated to clean if a visitor is arriving, while only 58% of men find this a motivating factor.

The same gender pattern follows for reorganizing, cleaning under furnishings, swapping out seasonal clothes, washing windows, de-cluttering and donating old clothes to a local charity. Only when it comes to cleaning cell phones and computers is there gender cleaning-equality, with both men (73%) and women (74%) citing the likelihood of cleaning.

Overall, 74% of Generation Y respondents agreed that spring cleaning is a worthy ritual and seeing news about spring cleaning keeps it top of mind.

For more information about the survey results, visit [http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/2011\\_spring\\_cleaning\\_survey\\_y\\_men\\_and\\_women\\_clean/](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/2011_spring_cleaning_survey_y_men_and_women_clean/).



## Get a Grip on Handwashing

### *Don't Let Good Hand Hygiene Take a Summer Vacation*

Flu season may be over, but that doesn't mean you should be any less vigilant about washing your hands. Just think of all the summer foods, like barbeque hamburgers, corn on the cob and watermelon that we eat with our hands.

Summer colds and foodborne illnesses are spread by unclean hands. In addition, good hand hygiene will also reduce the risk of spreading germs that have become resistant to antibiotics, such as methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MSRA.

Here's how to properly wash your hands when soap and water are available:

- Wet hands with warm, running water.
- Apply soap and rub hands together vigorously to make a lather, and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue scrubbing for 20 seconds, or about as long as it takes to sing one verse of "Old MacDonald Had a Farm."

- Rinse well under warm, running water. Dry hands thoroughly.

So much of summer is spent on the go, at picnics, barbeques, ball games...places where food is served, and again it is food that we eat with our hands, like hot dogs, nacho chips, and ice cream cones. Soap and water may not be readily available. Be prepared! Keep hand-sanitizer and/or handwipes in your car, purse, briefcase, backpack, picnic basket, etc., so you never have to sacrifice good hand-hygiene habits for good food.

The American Cleaning Institute®, in conjunction with the American Society for Microbiology, has developed a Get a Grip on Handwashing brochure with additional information. To download a copy, visit <http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/assets/1/AssetManager/GetAGrip.pdf>.

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## Surviving Summer Storage

### *Guidelines for Storing Winter Clothes*

Now that the warmer weather is finally here, it's time to move those heavy winter clothes out of the closet to make room for some summer finery. But don't just put them out of sight and out of mind. If you do that, warns Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®, you may be in for some unpleasant surprises when the cold weather returns. To avoid this, here are her recommendations:

- **Thoroughly clean all items before storing.** Certain soils can attract insects. You wouldn't want your favorite sweater to become their feasting ground! In addition, stains that the eye can barely see may turn yellow or darken over time.
- **Make repairs.** Check for sagging hemlines, missing buttons, split seams, etc. Repair them now so your clothes will be wear-ready when that first cold day strikes.

- **Don't starch or iron garments before storing.** Starch just provides more nourishment for insects. Ironing may heat set stains that have not been completely removed. If they reappear after a long summer siesta, they may be impossible to remove.
- **Store garments in a cool, dark, dry, well-ventilated area.** Good choices include a cool closet, an airtight chest, or an under-the-bed cardboard box. Avoid plastic bags or bins. They can trap air and moisture, creating a damp, unsuitable atmosphere.
- **Don't neglect your coats.** Once we stop wearing them, there's a tendency to stop thinking about them. Then, on that first chilly day, you may be in for a nasty surprise. If professional dry-cleaning is required, check to see if the drycleaner offers box storage. Then make a note on your calendar to pick them up before the cold weather strikes.





## Ask Nancy

## Tell Nancy



Remember when you were in school and show-and-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 our readers! Write something on our [Facebook](#) wall, direct message us on [Twitter](#), text us or send us an [email](#) with your cleaning crisis or dirty dilemma.

**Q: I know that hard water can leave mineral deposits that cause spotting on glassware. Does very hard water also inhibit a detergent's ability to dissolve completely? Is the fine powder-like film residue on dishware actually the remains of undissolved detergent?**

**A:** That white deposit is not undissolved detergent. It is a film residue caused by the hard-water minerals that remain after the water has evaporated – the same culprit that causes spotting! To prevent either from happening, you need to adjust two things – the amount of detergent and the water temperature – and use a rinsing agent. In addition to helping with the mineral-deposit problem, the following should also result in clean, shiny dishes.

**Detergent amount:** Water hardness plays a role in the amount of detergent that is needed. Too little or too much detergent will affect your dishwasher's ability to clean. Generally, soft water requires less detergent while hard water requires more. Follow the usage recommendations on the detergent package and in the dishwasher's Owner's Manual. Check with your local water utility to find out the hardness rating for your water.

**Water temperature:** The optimum temperature is 140°F, but it should be no lower than 120°F. For older machines, you may need to run the water in your sink until it is hot before starting your dishwasher.

**Rinsing aid:** Adding a rinsing aid improves the sheeting action of the dishwasher, which will help wash the minerals away from the dishes.

**Q: I unpacked my tent to get ready for the camping season, and found there was mold growing in the folds. How can I clean it without ruining the water-resistant properties?**

**A:** If possible, start by contacting the tent manufacturer for specific directions. If this isn't possible, wait for a warm, sunny day and then set up your tent in a shady location. Shake or brush off dirt and any other debris that can be easily removed. Fill a bucket with warm water, add a few squirts of dishwashing liquid, and mix well. Using a sponge or a soft-bristled brush, hand wash both the inside and outside of the tent. Rinse thoroughly with a hose. Be sure to rinse off all the soap. If you fail to do that, a sticky residue will remain that attracts dirt, which in turn will abrade the fabric. Never use laundry detergent to clean the tent; no matter how much you try to rinse it off, a residue will remain that attracts water and reduces the water-repellency of the fabric.

Allow the tent to dry completely out of direct sunlight. This may take several days. Be sure to check thick-sewn seams to make sure they are no longer damp. If the weather suddenly decides not to cooperate, bring your tent inside and place it over a drying rack. If possible, put a dehumidifier in the room.

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



## Clean Ideas .....

### Keeping up with the Grime

#### *Daily Dozen Tips for Bathroom Cleaning*

A grungy bathroom is not only unpleasant to look at – it's also a breeding ground for germs, mold and mildew. Here are 12 tips to help keep the bathroom clean and sparkling on a daily basis. For family members with asthma, many of these best practices will help keep mold and mildew, which can trigger an asthma or allergy attack, under control.

1. **Use the bathroom fan:** It can help remove the moisture that causes mold and mildew. Vacuum the vents regularly to remove any dust that might inhibit the fan's effectiveness.
2. **Keep pop-up disinfectant wipes next to the sink:** Train family members to wipe down the sink and its surroundings every time they turn the tap water off.
3. **Hang a squeegee in the shower:** Use it to quickly clean the walls and glass doors before stepping out of the shower.
4. **Use wipes:** These are handy for cleaning around toilet rims, tanks, faucets, sinks and basins. Check the label for disposal instructions – flushable wipes disperse in water when agitated (like toilet paper) and they're safe for plumbing and septic tanks.
5. **Be soap-smart:** The choice between bar soap and liquid soap is a matter of personal preference. However, the way your family uses the soap may influence your choice. Bar soaps are great if they find their way back to the soap dish. Pump dispensers may be neater if the user's aim is accurate!
6. **Keep a bleach pen on hand:** It's a great tool for spot-cleaning mold and mildew.
7. **Get a hand-held vacuum:** When you think of vacuuming, the bathroom isn't the first room that comes to mind. However, consider the hair, dust, talcum powder and more that finds its way to the floor. A small, hand-held vacuum makes quick pickups a breeze.
8. **Rinse the tub:** Doing this after each use helps keep soap film and hard-water deposits from forming.
9. **Keep shower doors and curtains open after use:** This allows them to air-dry and helps prevent mildew.
10. **Use a daily shower cleaner:** Regular use will help keep shower and tub surfaces free of soap scum, mildew stains and hard-water deposits. Mist surfaces right after showering while the walls are wet and warm – no rinsing, wiping or scrubbing is necessary.
11. **Sort out reading material:** If reading in the bathroom is a family habit, don't let old magazines and newspapers accumulate. They are a magnet for dust and mold.
12. **Stock up:** Keep a set of cleaning supplies in the bathroom. Cleaning is easier if you don't have to travel far to get what you need. If there are small children in the household – or small visitors who use this bathroom – make sure the cleaning supplies are stored in a cabinet with a child-resistant lock.