

# Cleaning Matters

November/December 2004

Tips and Trends from The Soap and Detergent Association

## Season's Cleaning!

### *Easy ways to spruce up your home at the holidays*

During the holidays, your desire for a clean home is usually at odds with a busy schedule of shopping and socializing. A thorough cleaning *before* the season begins will give you a head start. Then, follow up with these keep-on-top-of-it tips from The Soap and Detergent Association.

**Take inventory.** Make sure you're well-stocked with cleaning supplies. Store most frequently used items in containers that are easy to carry from room-to-room.

**Double up.** A full set of cleaning supplies on each floor of your home makes for easy spot cleaning.

**Wipe down.** Disposable wipes are easy to use. Keep containers of pop-up disinfectant wipes handy, so everyone can use them. Stash dry, disposable electrostatic wipes around the house, so it's easy to make dust disappear!

**Spray away.** Use a daily shower cleaner to keep shower and tub surfaces free of soap scum, mildew, and hard-water deposits. Mist the surfaces right after showering, while the walls are still wet and warm.

**Freshen up.** A spray-on fabric refresher helps to remove odors, including those from cigarette smoke, cooking, and perfume on soft, hard-to-wash surfaces, such as carpets, upholstery, and curtains. It's great to use pre- and post-party!

**Carpet call.** Place rugs or mats at all entrances to catch dirt and grit that family and guests track in. Frequent vacuuming helps keep your wall-to-wall and area carpets in shape!

**Collect coasters.** Keep them ready and available for family and guests. Use them under beverage glasses and cups to prevent rings and water spots on your wood surfaces.

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## Calendar of Clean

### Coming in January/February 2005

One of SDA's traditions is changing to keep pace with the world of technology. For more than 35 years, SDA has "snail mailed" its newsletter to thousands of educators and the media. But, beginning with the January/February 2005 issue, *Cleaning Matters* will be available electronically only! That's right, no more paper copies.

We don't want you to miss a single issue, so be sure to sign up to receive the newsletter in your inbox. Send an email with your name, email address, phone number, and "Cleaning Matters Subscription" in the subject area to: [cleaningmatters@cleaning101.com](mailto:cleaningmatters@cleaning101.com). Or, go to [www.cleaning101.com](http://www.cleaning101.com) to subscribe.

**Waste not.** A waste basket in every room makes cleanup a lot easier.

**Make a nightly sweep.** Just before bedtime, make a walk-through inspection of the house. Hang up clothes, stack magazines and newspapers, put dirty plates and glasses in the dishwasher, and discard unwanted mail.



Enhancing health and quality of life through education.

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## News Flash

### Stain-less at Thanksgiving!

*Let turkey, not stains, be your main leftover*

When the Thanksgiving meal is done, turkey isn't the only leftover. Food stains also leave a colorful trail behind. No need to worry, The Soap and Detergent Association offers these helpful tips for a stain-less Thanksgiving!

**Set the Ambiance:** Start dinner off with *candles*, but watch out for *wax stains*. Recipe for removal: Use a dull knife to scrape off surface wax. Place stain between paper towels and press with a warm iron, transferring the wax to the towels. Continue, using clean towels, until the wax no longer transfers. Then, place stain facedown on another clean paper towel and sponge with a prewash stain remover; blot with paper towels. Let dry, then launder.

**Treat the Appetizer:** Treat and wash stains promptly. The longer stains sit on a fabric, the more difficult they may be to remove. Here's how to remove some stains.

#### What's On the Menu?

- **Turkey, gravy, butter, and salad dressing** (oil-based stains). Recipe for removal: Pretreat with a prewash stain remover. Launder in the hottest water that's safe for the fabric.
- **Cranberry sauce, apple cider, and pumpkin pie** (fruit-based stains). Recipe for removal: Treat these stains promptly. Remove excess fruit and run the fabric under cold water. Wash the item as soon as possible using the warmest water and bleach that are safe for the fabric.
- **Coffee, tea, wine, and soft drinks** (beverage stains). Recipe for removal: Soak or sponge stain in cool water. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover or liquid laundry detergent. Launder using oxygen bleach or chlorine bleach, if safe for fabric.
- **Colorful cakes and desserts** (food-coloring stains). Recipe for removal: Sponge stain promptly with cool water. If this doesn't remove stain, soak stain in cool water for at least 30 minutes. After soaking, pretreat with a prewash stain remover or liquid laundry detergent, then launder.

### Clean Hands Report Card

*Americans Get a "C" for Hygiene*

In the midst of cold and flu season, The Soap and Detergent Association reports that consumers need to do a better job of *when* and *how* they wash their hands. SDA's Clean Hands Report Card<sup>SM</sup> gives Americans a "C" for hand hygiene, although many would give themselves a higher grade.

#### Survey says:

- **43%** seldom or never wash their hands after coughing or sneezing. One of the most common ways people catch colds is by rubbing their nose or eyes after touching someone or something contaminated with the cold virus.
- **32%** don't always wash before eating lunch. That means germs that were on the change, door handle, and elevator button might find their way onto the midday turkey sandwich.
- **54%** don't wash their hands long enough to effectively remove germs and dislodge dirt. The CDC and SDA recommend washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

#### Do as I Say, Not as I Do

According to the survey, 90% of Americans said they always washed their hands after using the bathroom, while eight percent said they frequently washed, and two percent said they seldom or never washed. Apparently, there's a major gap between what people say and what they do. A 2003 observational study by the American Society for Microbiology found that one third of public restroom users *did not* wash their hands.

#### When to Wash

"More Americans should know that their health is literally in their hands. Handwashing is critical in these key instances," says SDA's Nancy Bock.

- when preparing food
- before meals and snacks
- after using the restroom
- after touching animals
- when hands are dirty
- when you or someone around you is ill

#### Hygiene Tools at Hand

When soap and water aren't available, instant hand sanitizers, gels, and foams are effective in killing germs on hands. Disposable hand wipes are another alternative for people with active lifestyles. Visit SDA's new hand hygiene site at: [www.cleaning101.com/handhygiene](http://www.cleaning101.com/handhygiene).

## Highlights

### Clean Homes ... Healthy Families Award

Recognizing National Extension Association for Family & Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) members for innovative, educational programs that link clean homes and good health

And the winners are:

- **Susan White-Sayers** and **Diane Mason** of University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service (Newport).

Honored for developing an indoor air quality workshop and related educational materials that taught childcare providers proper cleaning and disinfecting practices and the importance of removing asthma and allergy triggers.

- **Dianne Miiller, Cassandra Corridon,** and **Madeleine Greene** of Montgomery County, Maryland Cooperative Extension Service.

Honored for creating programs that helped nearly 20,000 residents improve their food safety and sanitation practices. Food safety and education programs were adapted to train community workers on proper hygiene and cleaning practices.

### No-fuss Auto Dishwashing

#### *Cleaning made simple!*

Holiday cooking and entertaining means you're bound to have a pile of dishes. Fortunately, your dishwasher can help lighten the load! Use these easy tips from The Soap and Detergent Association to help maximize the cleaning.

**Scrape your plate.** Scrape off large food particles and place soiled dishes directly into the dishwasher.

**Low-down on loading.** How dishes are loaded will affect cleaning performance. Check your machine's manual for proper loading instructions. As a general rule, place the dirtiest side of each item facing the source of the water spray.

**Zap spots.** A rinse aid will help prevent water spots, especially if you have hard water.

**Perk up plastic.** New on the market is a plastic cleaning booster to help remove tough stains on plasticware. Your plastic cutting boards, containers, cutlery, cups, and baby bottles can look new again.



### Cleaning Questions?

### Ask Nancy!

#### **Q: Is it true that washing dishes in the dishwasher helps fight germs?**

**A:** Yes, an automatic dishwasher helps fight the spread of germs in the kitchen. How is it done? With the use of heat, mechanical wash action, and detergent. Some newer models may have a certified "sanitize" option, which assures that 99.99% of bacteria typically found on dishes, glasses, and utensils will be removed during the cycle.

Make sure the water in your dishwasher is hotter than 140° F or bacteria can survive. If the water temperature is lower than that, bacteria can spread to other items in the dishwasher. Also, avoid spreading germs back onto clean and sanitized items by remembering to wash your hands prior to unloading the dishwasher.

#### **Q: I've read about using chlorine or color-safe bleach to remove laundry stains. What's the difference between the two?**

**A:** Chlorine bleach *removes* color, generally whitens fabrics, and disinfects. Color-safe bleach *maintains* color and whiteness. It can be used on most fabrics, but does not disinfect. Both chlorine and color-safe bleaches can be excellent stain removers. Always read and follow both garment care labels and bleach label directions before laundering.

#### **Q: I just used my cutting board to prepare raw meat for a holiday feast. How should I clean the cutting board to help prevent foodborne illness?**

**A:** Raw meat, poultry, and seafood can contain harmful bacteria. To help prevent the spread of bacteria, you should thoroughly wash the cutting board – and any other dishes and utensils that came in contact with these raw foods – with soap and hot water. You can also disinfect the cutting board using chlorine bleach.

— Nancy Bock is Vice President of Education for The Soap and Detergent Association



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# Cleaning Matters

## Clean Ideas

### Pack Smart, Look Smart

*Holiday travel packing tips to keep you and your clothes looking great!*

- 1. Clean & dry.** Before packing clothes, make sure clothes are clean and dry.
- 2. Zip it.** Button all buttons and zip all zippers before folding to preserve garment shape.
- 3. In the fold.** Carefully fold garments to avoid stretching, indentations, and excessive wrinkling.
- 4. It's in the bag.** Use a net bag designed for lingerie to help prevent fraying, catching, and tearing of delicate items.
- 5. Sheet action.** Place a dryer sheet in your luggage to help keep clothes smelling fresh.

**6. Get rid of wrinkles.** When you arrive at your destination, unpack as soon as possible. Hang creased items in the bathroom while you shower to help steam out wrinkles.

**7. Traveler's kit.** To keep clothes looking and smelling their best while you're on the road, take a laundry travel kit that includes a stain removal stick, gel, or wipe, wrinkle-releasing spray, and fabric refresher.

For more information, visit: [www.cleaning101.com](http://www.cleaning101.com).

### About Us

SDA, the Home of the U.S. Cleaning Products Industry<sup>SM</sup>, is dedicated to educating the public about the safety and benefits of cleaning products and practices and protecting the ability of our members to formulate products that best meet consumer needs.