

Cleaning Matters®

Tips and Trends from The Soap and Detergent Association

November/December 2009

Features

- **Cleaning Products 101**

How to make sure you've got the right products in your cleaning closet

- **Cold and Flu Webinar Great Success**

Recording now available

- **Clean Beds for Good Health**

Ways to freshen up the bed

- **Food Safety for the Holidays**

Avoiding anxiety about preparing and planning a holiday feast

- **SNAP to It!**

National award program encourages innovative handwashing programs

- **BEAR-LY CLEAN**

How to clean those favorite stuffed animals

- **Tell Nancy Your Handwashing Stories!**

- **Quick Holiday Spruce-Ups**

Tips for avoiding a harried holiday season

Cleaning Products 101

How to make sure you've got the right products in your cleaning closet

Think about all the different hard surfaces in your home. Your floors might be wood, stone or vinyl; walls could be paint, wallpaper, tile, brick or stone; countertops could be butcher block, stainless steel, concrete, tile, laminate, engineered stone or natural stone – and these are all just a few of the options. So how do you decide what cleaning products to use?

The reality is that there is no one perfect answer. To get optimum cleaning results, have a variety of products in your cleaning closet in order to always have the right one for the job at hand.

Start with All-purpose Cleaners

Note that many of these products come in different formulations – regular strength or concentrate, liquid, gel or powder, spray or wipe, and more. The version you choose is a matter of personal preference.

- **Abrasive all-purpose cleaners** are designed for tough cleaning jobs in small areas. They come in three forms: powder, liquid and scouring pads. The liquid form is usually the gentlest.
- **Non-abrasive all-purpose cleaners** are available as powders that can be dissolved to the proper strength and as liquids that can be diluted or used full strength. The newest powders and liquids are concentrated products. Liquids are also available as trigger sprays, in aerosol cans or in pump-actuated bottles. Powders and liquids, mixed with water, are most often used on fairly large washable surfaces, such as floors and walls; spray versions are most often used for smaller areas.

more



Enhancing health and quality of life through education.

Web: www.cleaning101.com
Email: info@cleaning101.com



Calendar of Clean

November is ...

- **Veterans Day: Nov. 11**
- **National American Teddy Bear Day: Nov. 14**
See *BEAR-LY CLEAN* article
- **Thanksgiving: Nov. 27**
See *Food Safety for the Holidays* and *Clean Ideas* articles

December is ...

- **CLEAN® Award deadline: Dec. 7**
See *SNAP to It!* article
- **National Handwashing Awareness Week: Dec. 6-12**
See *SNAP to It!* and *Cold and Flu Webinar Great Success* articles
- **National Influenza Vaccination Week: Dec. 6-12**
See *Cleaning Products 101* and *Clean Beds for Good Health* articles
- **New Year's Eve: Dec. 31**
See *Food Safety for the Holidays* and *Clean Ideas* articles

Cleaning Products 101 (cont.)

Add Specialty Cleaners to Your Collection

Specialty cleaning products have a narrower spectrum of uses than all-purpose products. They are designed for specific surfaces, such as glass, bathroom surfaces, ovens, drains, metal, floors, carpets, furniture and upholstery, and the soils that usually collect on these surfaces. By concentrating on specific conditions, specialty products can deliver optimum performance and convenience.

Which Cleaners to Use

With so many varieties and brands to choose from, how do you know which ones are best for the surface you are cleaning?

- **Read the cleaning product labels.** The label will tell you what type of cleaner (all-purpose cleaner, laundry detergent, disinfectant cleaner, etc.) it is. If it is designed for a specific type(s) of surface (ceramic tile, glass, brass, chrome, etc.), it will also be listed on the label.
- **Be surface-specific.** Some surface manufacturers (particularly in the countertop and flooring industries) recommend a specific type or brand of cleaner for their product. Check the manufacturer's website or the product literature to be sure.
- **Consult the Hard Surface Hygiene Fact Sheet** developed by The Soap and Detergent Association. It explains the purposes and proper usage of disinfecting and sanitizing products. When used properly, these products play an important role in helping to ensure that our homes are clean and our families are healthy. Download it at http://cleaning101.com/Hard_Surface_Hygiene.pdf.

Take Inventory

To get a good grasp on what should be in your cleaning closet, take a look around your home and make a list of all the different types of surfaces that need to be cleaned. Then line up the cleaning products you already own. Read the labels and put a check next to each item on the list if you have a product designed to clean it. Now ask yourself some questions.

- **Are there products you are missing?** If there's no check mark next to a surface, that means you need to expand your cleaning supplies.
- **Could you get better or more convenient results** if you switched to a different type of product? People have different cleaning styles. Some people prefer concentrates, while others prefer sprays or wipes. Some people want a few "do it all" products, while others prefer the optimum results that specialty cleaners provide.
- **Where are your cleaning supplies stored?** If you have products you never use, chances are that they aren't in a convenient location. Consider how to rearrange your cleaning supplies so that frequently-used products are close at hand and seldom-used ones are easier to find. Out of sight tends to be out of mind. To combat that, make a list and tape it to the inside of the cupboard where the seldom-used products are stored.

News Flash

Cold and Flu Webinar Great Success

Recording now available

Nearly 300 people registered for the SDA Cold and Flu Webinar presented on September 24, 2009 during International Clean Hands Week. Participants from 45 states, the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, chapter advisers from Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, schools, hospitals, Cub Scouts, church volunteers and community leaders participated in the webinar.

The session provided an up-to-the-minute update on H1N1, offered science-based information from trusted sources and shared resources for obtaining educational materials. Presented by experts Nancy Bock, The Soap and Detergent Association, Vice President of Education and Meetings, Dr. Diane

Allensworth, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP), Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH), and Barbara Hyde, American Society of Microbiology, Director of Communications, the webinar provided information that is ready to share.

The Webinar was recorded for those who may have missed it. Go to <http://cleaning101.com/files/2009-cold-flu-webinar.wmv> to view, download and share this webinar and help create a network of people that can provide leadership in public health nationwide. Be sure to also visit the Online Cold and Flu Toolkit at <http://cleaning101.com/sda-cold-flu-toolkit/> to download, print and share these hygiene messages. For questions, email education@cleaning101.com or call (202) 347-2900.



Clean Beds for Good Health

Ways to freshen up the bed

Flu season is a good time to give your beds a thorough cleaning. And if someone in your household is just getting over a bout with the flu, there's nothing nicer than a fresh, clean bed to celebrate the recovery.

Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, shares some tips for giving your beds a slumber-ready cleaning.

"Everyday" items, like sheets, pillows and mattress pads, as well as most blankets and comforters, are washable. The more decorative components, like bed skirts, throw pillows, bedspreads, coverlets and throws, may be dry-clean-only. Check the care labels to be sure.

Mattress: Vacuum to remove any loose dirt or dust. A light spray with a fabric refresher will help remove any lingering odors; for double-duty, choose one with a formula designed to reduce allergens from pollen and dust mites. Vacuum and spray one side. Wait until the mattress is dry, and then flip it over and vacuum and mist the other side.

Mattress pad: Check the care label, then wash, using the recommended bleach and the hottest water that's safe for the fabric. Machine-dry.

Bed pillows: Most pillows can be cleaned in the washing machine, but read the label for cleaning instructions particularly for feather or down pillows as these may need to be dry cleaned. Wash them two at a time, agitating for only one or two minutes on the gentle cycle. Use the spin dry feature of your washer at least twice to get as much moisture out of the pillows as possible. When drying, remove them and fluff them periodically. This will prevent clumping and promote even drying. Tossing a few tennis balls in the dryer with the pillows will also help prevent clumping.

Blankets: Along with mattress pads and pillows, blankets should be washed at least four times a year. Follow the care label instructions. If the instructions are missing or faded, machine-wash in warm water on the gentle cycle and machine-dry on the low heat cycle.

Comforter: Depending on the capacity of your washing machine, it can be difficult to wash a comforter at home. Don't try to cram it into the machine. Instead, take it to a laundromat and wash it in one of the large capacity machines. Be sure to check the care label before washing particularly for feather or down comforters as these may need to be dry cleaned.

Electric blanket: Check the care label. Generally, electric blankets shouldn't be dry-cleaned, because the chemicals may ruin the wiring. Most electric blankets can be machine-washed, using the gentle cycle and only two to three minutes of agitation. Don't put the blanket in the dryer unless the care label recommends it. Instead, hang it over two lines or lay it flat to dry.

Bed skirt: If your bed skirt or dust ruffle is dry-clean-only, and it isn't soiled, toss it in the dryer with a fabric softener sheet. The sheet will trap the dust and the heat of the dryer will destroy any germs. Or use an in-home dryer kit to clean and refresh it.

Decorative pillows: Some decorative pillows have removable covers so the pillow and the cover can be cleaned separately, according to the care label instructions. If the cover is dry-clean-only and appears to be permanent, if you are handy with a needle and thread you can remove it by carefully ripping out the stitching along one edge. Clean the cover and the pillow (unless the care label says otherwise) using a home dry cleaning kit. Once the parts are clean, insert the pillow and hand-sew the opening closed.

Food Safety for the Holidays

Avoiding anxiety about preparing and planning a holiday feast

Although current health concerns are rightly centered on preventing the spread of the H1N1 (Swine Flu) virus, we also shouldn't overlook other sources of illness. The approaching holiday season, when so many celebrations revolve around food, is a time when the risk of foodborne illnesses increases. And, since their symptoms can often be mistaken for the flu, it's important to take the risk "off the table"!

The Partnership for Food Safety Education www.befoodsafe.org, which includes The Soap and Detergent Association and its network of more than 50 Be Food Safe food retailers, are working to help relieve anxiety about preparing a safe, happy meal for Thanksgiving and other holiday feasts with the Holiday Success Kit. The kit, which can be downloaded from <http://www.holidayfoodsafety.org> includes:

- Information on purchasing turkey, as well as safe practices for thawing and cooking
- A holiday planner that includes a timeline and shopping list

- Kids' games and family activities
- Menus and recipes, including ideas for leftovers

But remember that it's not just in preparing holiday meals that safe food practices should be followed. Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, offers some basic steps to food safety.

- **Clean:** Wash hands and food preparation surfaces often.
- **Separate:** Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs away from other foods in the shopping cart, grocery bags, refrigerator, and on preparation surfaces.
- **Cook:** Use a food thermometer to insure that all foods are cooked or reheated to the proper temperature.
- **Chill:** Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs, seafood and other perishables within two hours of cooking or purchasing – within one hour if the temperature outside is above 90° F.

SNAP to It!

National award program encourages innovative handwashing programs

SNAP, which stands for School Network for Absenteeism Prevention, is a grassroots, education-based effort to improve health by making hand cleaning an integral part of the school day. The program is sponsored by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and The Soap and Detergent Association.

Each year, SNAP challenges school teams to create their own clean hands awareness projects and recognizes those who have done an outstanding job. The top award is an all-expense-paid trip for three to Washington, D.C., that includes an awards ceremony in the nation's capital and a special celebration for the entire class.

In late September, the 2009 SNAP award winners were honored at a special luncheon and presentation at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The National Award Recipient was All Saints Regional Catholic School, Manahawkin, New Jersey. The two runners-up were Carwise Middle School, Palm Harbor, Florida, and Hauppauge Middle School, Hauppauge, New York. Information about their outstanding projects can be found at <http://itsasnap.org/snap/pdfs/SNAPVirtualAwards2009.pdf>.

This website also has a wealth of information to inspire both schools and individual classes to get

involved in the 2010 SNAP program. Included are suggestions about integrating handwashing into various aspects of the school curriculum. To be eligible for one of the national awards, the project and complete school information must be submitted by March 1, 2010. If ever there was a time to teach children about the connection between handwashing and good health, that time is now ... and the SNAP program is one great way to do it!

Applications accepted for 2010 C.L.E.A.N.® Award

Nominate the custodian at your school

The National C.L.E.A.N.® Awards Program is a joint initiative of The Soap and Detergent Association, National Education Association, and National Education Association Health Information Network to recognize the contributions that custodians make to public health in their schools, communities, and their profession. Now in its second year, a few adjustments have been made to the nomination process. This year there is the option for others to nominate a custodian or team of custodians. The Nomination deadline is December 7, 2009. For further information, visit the NEA HIN website at <http://www.neahin.org/cleanaward/index.html>.

BEAR-LY CLEAN

How to clean those favorite stuffed animals

Teddy bears are objects of unconditional love. They snuggle into beds at night. They travel in backpacks, in car seats and on airplanes. They endure sticky fingers, dusty corners and gooey kisses. They've even been known to stand in for pacifiers and chew toys. It's no wonder that this best buddy might just need a bath!

November 14th is National American Teddy Bear Day. It was created to honor the contribution the teddy bear has made to popular culture and remembers the day in 1902 when President Teddy Roosevelt refused to shoot a bear cub while on a hunting trip in Mississippi. What better day to gather up those teddies, along with any other cuddly companions in the household, and give them all a good cleaning?

Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, recommends that you start by vacuuming off any dust and loose grime. Then check for split seams; repair them before cleaning.

If teddy has a sound box or other mechanical or electronic device, it will need to be removed. Otherwise, washing will cause it to rust or create a corrosive residue and it won't work anymore.

If there are any particularly nasty stains, pretreat them by rubbing a little bit of liquid detergent directly on the stain. Then put teddy into a pillowcase and secure it shut with a knot, rubber band, or hair elastic. Although teddy won't mind being washed with other stuffed animals, don't overfill the pillowcase. Those cozy companions need room to move around. Wash in the washing machine on the gentle cycle with a small amount of detergent. Before putting teddy in the dryer, check to make sure the stains are gone. Close up the pillowcase again and put teddy in the dryer on low heat.

If teddy's fur needs a bit of "fluffing," brush it gently with an old, clean hairbrush.

Cleaning Questions? *Ask Nancy!*

**Tell Nancy Your Handwashing Stories!**

For almost 40 years, SDA's Cleaning Matters® newsletter has answered questions sent in by our readers, but we're excited to announce that we're turning the table, and letting our readers *Tell Nancy* about topics related to cleaning!

Have you done something special to encourage your family, coworkers, students or friends to wash their hands regularly? Has your school, organization or workplace developed a program to promote the benefits of clean hands? Have you spotted signs in restrooms or other public places that get the hand hygiene message out in a unique and/or humorous way? Let us hear from you! Send Nancy an email at info@cleaning101.com and write "handwashing story" in the subject line. Your story could appear in a future issue of our newsletter in the new *Tell Nancy* feature!

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

Clean Ideas

Quick Holiday Spruce-Ups

Tips for avoiding a harried holiday season

Get a handle on the holidays with great ideas for keeping dirt and chaos under control.

- **Dust the decorations.** Unpacking those holiday decorations can mean some unexpected cleaning. Depending on the item, the fastest way to get rid of dust on your decorations might be some gentle action with a disposable duster or wipe or vacuum using your soft dusting brush attachment
- **Sparkle plenty!** Clean windows and mirrors are a beautiful reflection of your holiday décor. Keep pre-moistened window wipes on hand to make smudges disappear in a wink. Besides glass, these are generally safe to use on chrome, stainless steel, plastic and vinyl surfaces.
- **Put out the welcome mat.** To welcome the company in and keep the dirt out, install easy-to-clean mats at all the exterior doors.
- **Plan ahead.** If properly stored, holiday decorations won't need preseason cleaning next year. As you take them down, clean them and then store them in closed bins, boxes or plastic bags that are clearly marked. If possible, group the decorations in categories like "dining room," "mantel," "front door," etc. That way, you can avoid the decorating frenzy by tackling your home one area at a time.
- **Don't reinvent the wheel!** If you particularly like the way you've decorated the door, the mantel, the staircase, etc. this year, take a picture and pack the photo away with the appropriate decorations.
- **Soak `em.** When you set the holiday table with your best linens, it's a natural invitation for spots and stains. For small stains, keep a stain stick or stain wipes close at hand. Or, once the meal is over, clear the table and pretreat any stains with a prewash stain remover. Fill the washing machine with soap, warm water and bleach that's safe for the fabric, toss the linens in, and let them soak overnight. If you missed a stain, soaking will generally remove it. Run the wash cycle in the morning.
- **Multiply your cleaning supplies.** Now's the time to stock up on your favorite cleaning supplies in small, refillable sizes and/or easy-to-use configurations that can be stored in multiple, convenient locations. Think creatively. For example, during the holiday season, it might make sense to have a cache of window wipes, an electrostatic dust cloth, a roll of paper towels and an all-purpose spray cleaner tucked away in a cupboard in the family room. The less time you have to spend fetching cleaning supplies, the faster and easier it is to get the job done.