

Cleaning Matters

September/October 2004

Tips and Trends from The Soap and Detergent Association

Scare Factor!

Tricks for treating spooky Halloween stains

Trick-or-treaters aren't the only ones who'll show up at your door this Halloween. Creepy critters called *stains* often tag along, too. Have no fear, The Soap and Detergent Association offers easy tips for scaring tough Halloween stains away! In addition, avoid hair-raising surprises by reading and following garment care labels before laundering. Some costumes *are not* washable.

Fruit-based stains (pumpkin, apple cider, fruit punch). Scare factor: *If not treated immediately, they can oxidize and turn brown.* How to clean: Treat these stains promptly. Remove excess fruit and run the fabric under cold water. Wash item as soon as possible using the warmest water and bleach that are safe for the fabric.

Hot chocolate & caramel candy stains. Scare factor: *Creates an eerie mess on the prettiest of costumes or clothes.* How to clean: Pretreat with a prewash stain remover or liquid laundry detergent. Then launder.

Chewing gum. Scare factor: *It casts a ghostly stain even when it's promptly peeled away.* How to clean: Remove gum residue by rubbing the stained area with ice. Then use a dull knife to carefully scrape off the excess. Saturate the area with a prewash stain remover. Rinse, then launder.

Face makeup. Scare factor: *It can leave smears and smudges in its wake.* How to clean: If makeup is oil- or wax-based, remove excess with the back of a spoon. Sponge the remaining stain with a prewash stain remover. Wash in hottest water that's safe for the fabric.

Nail polish. Scare factor: *It may be impossible to remove.* How to clean: Place stain facedown on clean paper towels. Apply nail polish remover to back of stain (don't use nail polish remover on acetate or triacetate fabrics). Replace paper towels frequently. Repeat until stain disappears. If it disappears, rinse, then launder. If stain doesn't disappear, treat again.



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What's Happening in September/October 2004!

- **September is National School Success Month.** Discover *clean* ways to keep kids in school and learning, see p. 2.
- **Clean Hands Week (Sept. 19-25).** See Highlights, p. 2.
- **The National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Convention (Oct. 3-6)** in Nashville, TN. Meet SDA at Booth #204!

Don't forget . . .

Beginning January 2005, *Cleaning Matters* will be electronic! From your mailbox to your inbox, SDA's informative, bimonthly newsletter will be completely available via the information super highway!

Be a part of this technologically-advanced step in *Cleaning Matters* history. Be sure to register at: www.cleaning101.com. Or, send an email with name, email address, phone number, and the sector you represent to: cleaningmatters@cleaning101.com today!

News Flash

Stay in School

Clean hands help keep kids in class and learning!

What's the single most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness? Cleaning your hands, reports the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In school settings, hand cleaning is especially important in keeping kids in class and learning, says The Soap and Detergent Association. September is National School Success Month, which recognizes parents and guardians who encourage their children to succeed in school. Keeping kids healthy and in school, where they're learning, fosters that success.

Each year, nearly **22 million** school days are lost due to the common cold. Bacteria, including *Salmonella* and certain strains of *E. coli*, can live for up to two hours on cafeteria tables, doorknobs, computer keyboards, etc. The good news is – frequent and proper hand cleaning prevents the spread of bacteria among the entire school community!

Look Ma, Clean Hands!

Here's how to wash hands properly:

- Wet hands with warm water and apply liquid, bar, or powder soap.
- Rub hands together vigorously to make a lather, and scrub all surfaces. Continue for 20 seconds to dislodge and remove stubborn germs.
- Rinse well under running water.
- Dry hands thoroughly using paper towels or air dryer. If possible, use paper towels to turn off faucet.

Remind kids that every trip to the bathroom should end with washing their hands.

Zap Germs with Hand Sanitizers

If soap and water are not available at school, alcohol-based wipes or gel formulas are effective for cleaning hands. Be sure to add these items to your child's school supply list!

Check Out SNAP!

The School Network for Absenteeism Prevention (SNAP) is a program for middle schools about the importance of hand cleaning. For more information, see the SNAP insert or visit www.itsasnap.org.

Highlights

Clean Hands Are Key!

Clean Hands Week is September 19-25

Sponsored by the Clean Hands Coalition, events will be held nationwide to raise awareness about the importance of proper hand hygiene. For more information, you can contact Nancy Bock at: nbock@cleaning101.com.



Wardrobe Longevity

The secret's in the wash!

There's nothing like the look and feel of brand-new clothes. But, beware: Poor laundry practices can make clothes look old before their time. To avoid this, The Soap and Detergent Association presents tips for helping clothes maintain that fresh, new look!

Read and follow garment care labels. It's key to preserving the look of your clothes. Some garment care labels now use symbols instead of words. You can download the guide to these symbols at: www.cleaning101.com/laundry.

Read and follow laundry product directions and use the right amount of detergent for your load. Too *little* detergent can affect cleaning power. Too *much* detergent can leave a residue that makes clothes look gray and dingy.

Sort clothes by color. Separate whites or white-background prints, pastels in solids and prints, medium and bright colors in solids and prints, and dark colors. This way, darker, brighter colors won't discolor whites or light-colored fabrics.

Use only the recommended bleach. Garment care labels will tell you whether you can use only color-safe bleach, chlorine bleach, or no bleach at all.

Cleaning for Good Health

Research supports what moms always believed!

Once again, studies support what public health researchers and generations of mothers have believed for decades – cleaning and disinfecting help protect against the spread of germs, particularly among children, reports The Soap and Detergent Association.

In a recent study conducted by the University of Arizona, researchers monitored the health of more than 1,000 children in participating day-care centers over a 10-week period. Here's what they found out . . .

Study: Cleaning = Improved Health

Half of the centers followed their normal cleaning procedures. This typically included less regular daily cleaning or spot cleaning of common surfaces, such as door handles and light switches. The other half followed a routine with specific recommendations for daily and weekly cleaning, using disinfectants or bleach.

At the end of the 10-week period, kids in the latter group were less likely to experience a range of health problems, including earaches, upper respiratory illnesses (colds and flu), and diarrhea. In addition, the children were less likely to receive prescriptions for antibiotics.

Bringing the Study Home

Common surfaces at home are breeding grounds for germs. But, following a routine for cleaning and disinfecting these surfaces, can help protect your health. Here's how to clean some common kitchen surfaces:

Kitchen counters: Use a clean cloth or paper towel, hot water, and a household cleaner to remove spills and daily grime. Clean up spills from raw meat juices and raw eggs with disposable paper towels to avoid contaminating kitchen dishcloths. Be sure to thoroughly clean and disinfect these areas!

Cutting boards: Thoroughly clean and disinfect all cutting boards after use. Plastic cutting boards can be disinfected by washing them in the dishwasher. Or, hand wash them in hot, soapy water; rinse, then flood the surface with a solution of three tablespoons of chlorine bleach to one gallon of water. Let the solution sit for several minutes, rinse with water, then air dry.

Appliances: Use hot, soapy water to wipe up spills and splatters on the stove, in the microwave, and in the refrigerator as soon as they occur.

Restore Your Laundry Room

Create a pleasant place for cleaning tasks

It's a fact – we have to do laundry. But, no one wants to spend a lot of time doing it, so The Soap and Detergent Association offers helpful tips for making your wash-day space more practical and efficient!

Reach easy. Consider installing shelves and bins to keep laundry products and cleaning supplies within easy reach.

Port-a-basket. Replace hampers with portable laundry baskets. This makes it easier to transport dirty clothes to the laundry room and clean ones to their storage spaces.

Pin it up. Install a bulletin board on the wall. It's great for pinning socks until their mates are found. Also, post a stain removal chart, washing and drying instructions for special-care items, and the guide to fabric care symbols. (Visit www.cleaning101.com/laundry to download this information.)

Hang out. Keep plenty of hangers in the laundry room, so clothes can go from the dryer to the hangers. This helps prevent wrinkles.



Cleaning Questions?

Ask Nancy!

Q: Is it safe to constantly use the same dish sponge to wipe down my kitchen counters?

A: No. You need to frequently wash sponges to remove bacteria. The average used kitchen sponge harbors **7.2 million** bacteria! Plus, these same bacteria can spread around the kitchen as you wipe surfaces.

As a precaution, frequently launder sponges, dishcloths, and towels using hot water and chlorine bleach (if safe for the fabric). To disinfect synthetic sponges, mix $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of regular-scented, chlorine bleach with one gallon of water in the sink. Soak the sponges for five minutes; rinse, then air dry.

At least daily, replace used sponges, dishcloths, and towels with clean ones. Using clean paper towels can also help prevent the spread of germs because germs are thrown away with the towels.

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



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Clean Ideas

Room with a View

Transform your child's room into a clean study haven

- 1. Zap germs.** To prevent the spread of germs, disinfect toys, door handles, and light switch covers with a disinfectant cleaner. Place a container of pop-up wipes in the room for quick clean-ups.
- 2. Sleep easy.** For a good night's sleep before school, launder your child's bedding. Try the new fabric softener dispensers for easy use.
- 3. Dust-free.** Use sprays, wipes, or dusters to get rid of dust on tabletops, television screens, and picture frames.
- 4. Vacuum me.** At least once a week, give carpets a regular vacuuming. This will help prevent gritty build-up that can cut fibers and shorten the life of the carpet.

5. Odor-less. After vacuuming, spray a fabric refresher on carpets, curtains, and pillows. This will neutralize everyday odors trapped in fabric fibers.

6. De-clutter. To reduce clutter, use brightly-colored bins for holding different types of clothes. Hang see-through plastic shoe racks on the door to store shoes, toys, or stuffed animals. Consider using hooks for clothes, instead of hangers. Place them at the right height for your child.

For more information, visit: www.cleaning101.com.

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