



# CleaningMatters

Tips and Trends from the American Cleaning Institute®

May/June 2012

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## Life's a Beach!

### ***Staying Clean During Summer Activities***

As the weather warms up, everyone wants to spend more time outside enjoying all the offerings of the season, including trips to the beach, park, local fairs and festivals – maybe even a night or two camping in the great outdoors. While nothing is better than relaxing outdoors with friends and family, don't be tempted by all the leisure to skip proper handwashing.

Public beaches and parks may not have well-stocked or clean bathrooms, and if they do, they always seem to be located far away from where you've set up your blanket and umbrella. "Don't worry," says Nancy Bock, Senior Vice President, Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®, "it's still easy to keep your family's hands clean, even on the longest of summer outings, as long as you've packed the right stuff. Just follow these simple tips to keep clean."

- Stock your bag with a "clean kit" containing a hand sanitizer, gel or a package of hand wipes, and if you're going to the beach, a small container of baby powder to help get the sand off fingers and toes.
- Keep one kit in the car, and another in your carry-on bag if traveling by plane or train. (Just remember: If you are traveling by plane, you can only carry on containers of 3 ounces or less.)
- Use the sanitizer and/or wipes before eating or drinking, even if you've just taken a dip in the lake or ocean.
- If kids are going to have a snack after spending time in the car, hand them a wipe first.
- Always remember to clean your hands first with the sanitizer or wipes before taking food out of the cooler.
- There are a variety of wipes on the market, so be sure to read the label and use products as directed.

## Calendar of Clean

### **May is...**

- May Day – May 1
- Mother's Day – May 13  
(see *A Day Off from Laundry*)
- Memorial Day – May 28  
(see *Ask Nancy!*)

### **June is...**

- Father's Day – June 17  
(see *Ask Nancy!*)
- First day of summer – June 20  
(see *Clean Ideas*)



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## Life's a Beach! (cont.)

### *Staying Clean During Summer Activities*

Not only is it important to use these products frequently, but it's also key to use them correctly. The best way to use a hand sanitizer is to use one or two squirts of the product, and then rub your hands together briskly, including the front and back, between fingers, and around and under your nails until your hands are dry. Do this for yourself, as well as for children not old enough to clean their own hands.

If using wipes, wipe all areas of your hands until they are visibly clean, using as many wipes as necessary. Do this before eating, even if hands do not appear dirty. Dispose of used wipes in an appropriate trash container, and let your hands air-dry. Then feel free to unpack your picnic or pick up that burger, and enjoy!

If you're lucky enough that your beach, park or favorite summer retreat has restrooms with running water and soap, be sure to wash hands frequently throughout the day – again, taking special care before eating.

To ensure a thorough handwashing, follow these simple steps:

- Wet hands with clean, running water and apply soap.
- Rub hands together to make a lather and scrub well. Don't forget the backs, between the fingers, and under nails. Again, help kids here – most seem to think that only the palms matter!
- Rub for at least 20 seconds – if you hum "Happy Birthday" twice, that should do it.
- Rinse under running water and dry using a clean towel, or air-dry.

In addition to keeping little hands clean, it's also important to keep them busy. If traveling with kids to the beach or park, make sure to give them ACI's newest coloring sheet to keep them quiet and happy during the long ride. Not only will they have fun, they may even learn a little something about keeping clean! Download, copy and share this coloring sheet from the American Cleaning Institute website at [www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean\\_living/publications.aspx](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/publications.aspx)

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## Celebrating the Season ... and the Environment

### *Entertaining Made Easier, Inexpensive and Green*

As your warm-weather entertaining ideas turn to backyard barbeques and Mother's Day brunches, be sure to keep Mother Earth in mind too.

"One way to drastically cut down on your waste production this season is to use non-disposable dishes, utensils, tablecloths and napkins," says Nancy Bock, Senior Vice President, Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®. Not only will your table look even more festive, you'll know that you're doing the right thing for the environment, not to mention your wallet! If you don't want to use breakable dishes outside, or your budget doesn't call for investing in a set of outdoor flatware and place settings, remember that you can put some disposable plastic utensils in the dishwasher and use them again. Perhaps they won't last for 10 years, but certainly they'll hold up for a summer season.

Consider using older tablecloths that might no longer work for more formal gatherings, and try a mix of different napkins for a casual feeling. Invite the kids to make decorations for the table or buffet. Better yet, get the kids involved by having them set the table! After all, if it's a Mother's Day celebration, the mother of the house should do as little work as possible.

When it comes to cleaning up, again, get the kids involved by encouraging them to clear the table and load the dishwasher. Just follow these tips to make sure your dishwasher use is as energy efficient as possible:

- Follow directions on the dishwashing detergent, and use as directed.
- Save energy by running the dishwasher when it's full.
- If necessary, scrape food residue and heavy grease prior to washing.
- Presoak cooked-on stains.
- Recycle dishwashing detergent containers when empty.





## Networking Opportunities with ACI

*Join Us At Upcoming Events*

The American Cleaning Institute® is sharing its' expertise at several conferences again this year. School nurses and educators attending these events are invited to stop by the ACI booth to catch up with Nancy Bock, Senior Vice

President, Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute® and Martha Chapin to see firsthand the newest handwashing and laundry education materials. Attendees are eligible for a prize drawing at each of these events.

Meeting Name	Organization	Meeting Dates	Location
2012 National Association of School Nurses Annual Conference	 National Association of School Nurses	June 23-26, 2012	San Francisco, CA
2012 American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Annual Conference & Expo		June 24-27, 2012	Indianapolis, IN
2012 National Education Association Annual Meeting	 NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION	June 28-July 5, 2012	Washington, DC
2012 Family, Career and Community Leaders of America National Leadership Conference	 The Ultimate Leadership Experience	July 8-12, 2012	Orlando, FL
2012 National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Annual Session	 National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences	Sept. 24-28, 2012	Columbus, OH

Before, during and after these events (or if you cannot attend), you can network through ACI's social media platforms. Be sure to join the conversation on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn ACI Clean Living group](#) or [Twitter.com/ACI\\_CleanLiving](#) to talk about trends, events and issues that impact better living for your family.



## A Day Off from Laundry

### *The Ultimate Mother's Day Gift*

With children come joy, laughter, surprises ... and lots of laundry. Yet no woman should have to launder her children's clothes on the day (or week!) she is being celebrated for raising them. Flowers are nice, cards are a necessity, but the best gift would be for the kids to take on that chore themselves.

Of course, how much they can help will depend on the age of the child. Nancy Bock, Senior Vice President, Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®, suggests some ways that even the youngest members of the family can pitch in:

- **Sorting clothes** – A child who can tell darks from lights can help with this task. Teach them that when you mix red and white, it makes pink. This is true for paint sets *and* for washing clothes.
- **Some children are old enough to read and understand the garment labels** – Here's a variation on the game of "hot and cold." Wash clothes requiring the same water temperature together. Learn to identify which clothes need to hang dry rather than go in the dryer.
- **Measuring the detergent** – Kids love playing scientist. Teach them to read the instructions on the laundry product container to determine the correct amount of laundry detergent needed. Make sure they know to wash off any detergent that may have gotten onto their hands, or wipe up any spills. Also, be sure to instruct them on properly closing containers and putting away laundry products after each use to protect pets or babies. This may require adult supervision.
- **Operating instructions** – Teach kids about the buttons and dials on the washer and dryer, and how settings may vary depending on the garment labels.
- **You must be this tall** – Children will need to be a certain height in order to reach into top loaders and retrieve every last wet sock and t-shirt. Then again, there are step stools!
- **Folding** – Little fingers may not be as nimble as more experienced hands. The most important thing to remember is this: Effort counts. When the kids aren't looking, you may want to refold your own items that could get wrinkled in drawers. But will it really matter if their pajamas or underwear aren't perfectly crisp? We didn't think so, either.



You've taught your child to say "please" and "thank you"; you've taught your child to read. It's a gift to teach your children life skills like laundry so that they know how to care for themselves. With a little luck, and a lot of patience, this just may be a Mother's Day gift that keeps on giving.

## 2012 National Awardees Announced for the Healthy Schools, Healthy People, It's a SNAP Program

### *A Look at Some Commendable Ideas*

The Healthy Schools, Healthy People, It's a SNAP (School Network for Absenteeism Prevention) program is a joint initiative of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and American Cleaning Institute®. This program seeks to improve hand-hygiene habits to help prevent the spread of infectious disease and reduce related absenteeism. Students K-12 in the United States create projects that will improve hand hygiene in their schools and communities, and award recipients receive national recognition, cash and cleaning supplies for their schools.

Congratulations to all participants, and to the 2012 Award Recipients:

- Diamond View Middle School in Susanville, California, earned the National Award for the comedic skit "Jeremy Germ and the Germinators." "Jeremy" appeared in posters around the school and even attended the community Halloween Festival! Students hosted a coloring contest, distributed brochures and took a pledge to fight off germs by properly washing their hands.
- Kittitas Secondary School in Kittitas, Washington, earned a Runner-Up Award for its "Coyote Clean Hands Campaign." Students promoted handwashing at the Ellensburg Rodeo and the Kittitas County Fair by placing hand sanitizers around the events, and creating a public service announcement and posters. They also created handwashing awareness activities on Global Handwashing Day and Halloween, and taught handwashing to first graders.
- Myers Middle School in Savannah, Georgia, also earned a Runner-Up Award for their handwashing project. After surveying classmates and determining that at least 15% did not wash correctly, students created a brochure and posters to teach proper handwashing. They also

wrote and performed a rap song and shared facts about handwashing over the school intercom system.

- Fifth graders at Douglas MacArthur Elementary School in Alexandria, Virginia, received a special Honorable Mention for creating a video of their "Wash Your Hands" rap song with original verse and choreography. They also made a "Soapy and Sudsy" banner and shared their video on the school mini-TV program.

Thank you to the review panel of experts from Virginia Cooperative Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Potomac Home Economics in the Northern Region of the Virginia Family and Consumer Sciences Association for their thorough review of all the applications.



Go to [www.itsasnap.org](http://www.itsasnap.org) to learn more about the Healthy Schools, Healthy People, It's a SNAP program and see photos and videos from our award recipients.



## Ask Nancy

## Tell Nancy



We'd love to hear more from our readers! Ask Nancy for guidance on [cleaning surfaces](#), [dirty dishes](#), [laundry](#) and [hands](#). Or tell Nancy how you solved your cleaning crises or dirty dilemmas. Share your questions or story on our [Facebook](#) wall, direct message us on [Twitter](#), or send an email to [nbock@cleaninginstitute.org](mailto:nbock@cleaninginstitute.org).

**Q: I've done a good job keeping my skin protected from the sun, and my kids protected from mosquitoes. But now I have bug spray and sunscreen on my clothes. What do I do?**

**A:** While that's definitely good news for you and your kids, it sounds like the family wardrobe didn't make out as well. But don't fear; most commercially available bug sprays and sunscreens do wash out relatively easily. First, pretreat the stains with a prewash stain remover, then launder, using the hottest water that's safe for the fabric. Check to make sure the stains are gone before you put the garment in the dryer, as heat could set stains that haven't washed out. Most stains should be gone at this point, but if any do remain, you could just accept the fact that summer is all about getting dirty, and instead focus on the sunshine and your kids (who will grow out of those stained clothes before you know it).

**Q: My husband was all set to throw some steaks on the grill, but it was filthy. How do I clean it?**

**A:** Most people love the smell of barbecue. But caked-on grizzle? Not so much. Yet, too many people seem to forget this important aspect of grilling and food safety. If the grates are removable, take them out and soak them in warm water and dish soap. Brush clean with a wire brush, and then reassemble the grill and let it air-dry. If other parts require cleaning, check the manual and follow directions. The key to a clean grill is to be diligent about cleaning it immediately after each use, rather than waiting until you're ready to start cooking. So, the next time you take the steaks off the grill, let any cooked-food residue burn away before turning it off. This is a simple thing to do while the meat "rests." Then turn off the grill, but while it's still warm, use a small wire brush to clean any food particles that remain on the cooking grates.

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



## Clean Ideas ..... Keep Hydrated

### ***And Keep Those Water Bottles Clean!***

As the weather heats up, so does our need to stay hydrated. Experts suggest drinking at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water per day, and more if you're exercising. One of the least expensive, easiest and most environmentally responsible ways to get all that water is by using a refillable water bottle.

Reusable water bottles now come in both metal and safe plastic, not to mention a variety of shapes, sizes and designs. There are removable tops, sippy tops, straws, spritzers and all sorts of other gizmos and gadgets, but the one thing all water bottles have in common is that you need to keep them clean. Bacteria can build up in water bottles if they are left full, especially if you are using them for beverages other than water. For best results, use bottles for water only, especially if you will be traveling. Some beverages such as milk can spoil, and the high sugar content in juice and soda can draw bugs and other pesky critters to congregate on, in or around your drink.

Check the bottle label for cleaning recommendations. Some are dishwasher safe (but maybe only in the top rack). If your bottle needs to be washed by hand, follow these simple steps to ensure that you have on-the-go safe drinking water all summer long:

- Hand-wash all parts of the water bottle in warm water and dish detergent before using for the first time. Some factory residue could be left on a new bottle, even though it looks clean. Bottles may have also been sitting in warehouses, factories or stores for months, where they could have gotten dirty or been touched by dozens of people before you purchase them.
- After each use, completely dismantle the water bottle and clean all parts thoroughly using warm water and dish detergent. If the bottle has a straw or spritzer, be sure to wash all those components, and then rinse thoroughly with clean water. Air-dry or use a clean towel.

So clean, refill and reuse those water bottles to stay hydrated and healthy all season long!

