



# CLEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

475 Park Avenue South New York, New York 10016

## DROP BY DROP Home Water-saving Tips

As water shortages become more severe across the country, we may be required to re-evaluate the water we use daily in our homes. According to information received by The Soap and Detergent Association, Americans use an average of 458 billion gallons of water annually. Considering that more than 60% of this water is for home use, opportunities abound for making dramatic impacts on community water supplies.

In an individual home, 75% of the water is used in the bathroom for toilet flushing (45%) and bathing (30%). The remaining 25% is used in the kitchen for dishes and laundry (20%) and drinking/cooking (5%).

The average family uses from 255,000 to 365,000 gallons of water a year. It is estimated that up to 50% of this water could be saved by implementing simple water-saving methods.

The easiest way to begin a home conservation program is to repair any leaks. Even a slow leak wastes from 15 to 20 gallons of water every day! Conservation can be implemented throughout the house; here are a few ideas:

### In the bathroom:

- Run the hot water first until it gets hot, then add cold water to adjust shower or bath temperatures.
- Block the drain before turning water on to fill the tub for a bath.
- Limit showers to a maximum of 5 minutes.
- Fill bathtubs only 1/4 full.
- Install low-flow showerheads.
- Turn off water while brushing teeth or shaving.
- Use the colder water to brush your teeth while waiting for water to heat up to wash your face.
- Use a plastic jug filled with marbles or stones to displace water in the toilet tank.
- Use the toilet only for flushing body wastes—don't use it to flush cigarette butts or tissues.

### In the kitchen and laundry:

- Install aerators on all faucets.
- Keep a water bottle in the refrigerator to avoid running the tap water until it gets cold.

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- Rinse vegetables before and after peeling instead of running water while peeling.
- Operate the dishwasher only when full. Use the rinse/hold cycle while waiting to accumulate a full load.
- Use a short dishwashing cycle if dishes are only lightly soiled.
- Wash full loads of laundry or adjust the water level to match the load size. ■





## HOME-MADE CLEANING PRODUCTS

### There's More to It Than Just Mixing Chemicals

Concern over the environment is leading consumers to seek personal ways to be involved in protecting it. One example is the proliferation of articles suggesting consumers mix household chemicals, such as vinegar, washing soda, ammonia, borax, lemon juice and baking soda, to make their own cleaning products.

The fact is, many commercial household cleaning products use these same chemicals as part of their formulations. And, as is true of all chemicals—whether natural or synthetic, taken off the kitchen shelf or contained in a commercial product—their use places some burden on the environment, and they must be handled appropriately.

Sometimes there is a false perception about the human safety of commercially produced household cleaning products. These products have a proven track record of safe use. Ingredients are continuously evaluated, individually and in combination, to assure the safety of the finished product.

In addition, commercial household cleaning products are designed to be safely treated in sewage treatment or septic tank/tile field systems. Surfactants (the workhorse ingredients) are biodegradable. As a result, these cleaning products are not hazardous to the environment.

Today's commercial household cleaning products provide busy families with easy-to-use, effective and economical solutions to their cleaning problems. A return to the home remedies of yesterday may not fit into the lifestyles of such families or have real benefits with respect to environmental and human safety concerns. When consumers purchase cleaning products, they bring home not only a mixture of ingredients, but years of the manufacturer's experience and expertise on the safe and effective use of each product.

Consider these components of commercial household cleaning products that are often unrecognized or taken for granted:

- **Human and Environmental Safety.** Safety is the first priority in the product development process. This requires application of a broad range of information by competent experts applying the latest technology.
- **Effectiveness.** Laboratory and consumer tests lead to the development of highly effective cleaning agents for a wide variety of surfaces and soils.

- **Safe Packaging.** Containers are designed to use the least amount of packaging required to maintain product integrity. They are safe to use, easy to use and, increasingly, made of recycled materials.
- **Product Use Information.** Labels provide specific instructions on the effective use of each product. Detailed information is available through 800 numbers listed on packages.
- **Safety Information.** Directions for safe use are included on labels and, where appropriate, instructions for treating accidental ingestion or eye exposure are also given. These instructions are based on careful consideration of each specific formulation. Additional information is instantly available by calling the 800 number provided on the label or by calling the local Poison Control Center.
- **Good Dollar Value.** Years of research and experience have resulted in products which use the least amount of ingredients to achieve the best results.

What about kitchen chemistry—mixing your own cleaning products? Some kitchen chemicals, such as washing soda, ammonia and even vinegar, can irritate eyes and skin. In addition, some may be caustic and harmful if accidentally ingested. Mixtures of these chemicals should be handled with the same care used when handling commercial household cleaning products. If combining chemicals at home, ask the following questions:

- **Is the mixture stable?** There is some concern about mixing seemingly benign ingredients at home because of potentially dangerous reactions. For example, chlorine bleach mixed with ammonia will form chloramine gas, which is hazardous.
- **Is the mixture stored in a container that is not accessible or attractive to young children?** Easily available, familiar household containers may invite accidents.
- **Is the container labeled properly?** Containers of home mixtures should always be labeled with their contents to help avoid improper use. This information is also important for medical treatment in case of accidental exposure.
- **If accidentally ingested or splashed in the eye, what is the appropriate treatment to minimize any damage?** Promoters of mix-at-home cleaning products should have appropriate treatment information readily available.

- Is the mixture effective, easy to use and economical? If the mixture is not effective and easy to use, consumers may not use it as often or even at all. Costly mixtures may prohibit some consumers from being able to use the mixture on a regular basis.
- Is the container safe, easy to use, recyclable/reusable? If the container is being used for a purpose other than its original intended purpose, it may not be safe or effective for a home cleaning mixture. Containers of common kitchen chemicals must be able to be disposed of in a responsible manner.
- How much is required to get the job done satisfactorily? Is this amount less of a burden to the environment than a commercial household cleaner? Some home formulas require up to 10 times the amount of chemicals for the cleaning task versus a commercial household cleaner. They can represent a greater environmental burden.
- What is the impact of the packaging on the solid waste disposal system? Multiple packages of "ingredients" for home formulas can represent a greater amount of packaging waste than a single container of a commercial household cleaning product.

Consumers are cautioned to take care to consider safety aspects when designing their own mixtures. Likewise, they should consider the environmental burden of the mixture and its packaging. In addition, consumers should seek assurance from anyone promoting mix-at-home solutions that their formulas are indeed safe. ■

### THE EFFICIENT KITCHEN

#### Organization Is the Answer

One of the most important considerations for an efficient kitchen is well-organized storage space. Zoned storage, with all utensils stowed close to their place of use, is an integral part of the well-designed kitchen. Spices can be stored in specially designed drawers near the cooktop; and, storing them in alphabetical order makes them easier to find. When arranging drawers and shelves, the most frequently used items belong in the front and within easy reach.

Clustering items that are used together helps, too. Consider keeping cutting utensils within easy reach of the chopping board. Frequent bakers might want to keep flour, sugar, rolling pin and measuring cups

all in one convenient location. For easy table setting, linens and dinnerware should be stored close to the eating area. For crease-free linens, store tablecloths on hangers, rather than folded in a drawer.

Easy maintenance is another efficient kitchen feature. Laminated countertops require only wipe-clean maintenance. Painted cabinets treated with a lacquer finish are more durable and easier to clean than untreated ones. While brass or chrome hardware can add a striking accent, beware of cabinetry details that require labor-intensive polishing. Washable wallcoverings, no-wax floors and simple window treatments further reduce cleaning time. A hand-held vacuum cleaner, located in the kitchen, is a quick way to pick up crumbs - a welcome idea for families with small children.

Life-style touches can customize the kitchen to match the family's needs and interests. A greenhouse window is perfect for the cook who prefers fresh herbs. A desk area provides a place to house cookbooks, as well as to catch up on family business. Locating the washing machine and dryer in the kitchen may be the perfect solution for a family with large loads of laundry. While some cooks prefer user-friendly, out-in-the-open storage systems, such as pegboards, grid systems, pot racks and hanging baskets, others opt for maintenance-free, out-of-sight storage. Particularly popular are enclosed countertop "garages" designed to conceal small appliances, such as coffee grinders, coffee makers and blenders. ■

### KEEP APPLIANCE FINISHES RUST FREE

#### Preventative Measures for Longevity

Moist climates and salty ocean air can cause rusting and shorten the life span of appliances. Take some precautions to prevent this from happening:

- Keep appliances in a dry area. In warm, humid climates, keep appliances in air-conditioning; don't keep them on a porch or breezeway.
- Keep appliances clean. Wipe the outside frequently with a clean, damp cloth using a mild non-abrasive cleaner. For specific cleaning guidelines, see manufacturer's instruction manual.
- Apply a coat of paste car wax to the finish. This helps protect the finish from moisture and dirt that encourage rust.
- Apply touch-up paint immediately to scratches so rust doesn't have a chance to form. ■





## MISCELLANY

### The Great Frame Up

Photo displays of family and friends are now an important element of home decor, making frames one of the fastest growing categories in home furnishings. Easy-to-use 35mm cameras, convenient and affordable film processing, and the improved quality of photographic prints means that the demand for frames is increasing. In addition to the basic wood and metal frames, consumers can choose from a wide range of new materials, combinations and treatments, including brass, silver, mixed metals, crystal, ceramic, faux stone and fabric. Many are styled to coordinate with major decorating trends, such as Old World, Romantic/Victorian, Art Deco and Southwest.

When it's time to clean pictures, The Soap and Detergent Association cautions against spraying glass cleaner directly on the glass. The cleaner may leak through the edges onto the picture underneath. Instead, spray the cleaner on a clean, soft cloth, then use the cloth to clean the glass surface.

### Fun to Make, Fun to Eat

When it comes to getting young children to eat nutritious food, harried parents can say good-bye to wheedling and threatening. Instead, they can tempt those tiny appetites with griddle-cooked foods in fun form shapes. One griddle comes packaged with metal rings in the form of a dinosaur, a gingerbread man, a teddy bear and a heart. They are designed to shape foods such as pancakes, eggs and grilled sandwiches. Another manufacturer is offering the Gourmet Mickey Waffler, which can make waffles with the famous Mickey Mouse grin in just 90 seconds. These fun shapes can make meal preparation a more enjoyable family activity, points out The Soap and Detergent Association.

### Selecting China Is A Family Affair

Today's bride tends to favor china with a more sophisticated look than brides of previous years. Much of this change is due to the fact that the first-marriage bride and groom of the '90's are older. The Soap and Detergent Association reports that, over the past twenty-five years, the average age of the first-time bride has increased from 20 to 23 years; the first-time groom, from 23 to 26 years. Generally, their education is complete, they have established their own homes,

and they want better merchandise. As a result, decisions about things such as china are no longer the sole responsibility of the bride. The choice is made as a couple and reflects both their tastes. Bridal patterns, with soft colors and floral motifs, are losing popularity; bolder, sharper colors, such as black, cobalt blue, red and white, are finding favor. Mix-and-match sets are gaining in popularity.

### Kids Go for Cotton

Almost half of all clothing manufactured for kids is made of cotton. The slightly wrinkled, status look that natural fibers impart to adult fashions has become acceptable for children's clothing, too. T-shirts, shorts, socks, dresses, skirts and jeans are all increasingly made of cotton.

For Spring '91, blue will be a popular color for children's cotton clothing. Ocean blue, a light electric blue, and teal will abound. Other fashion highlights include whitened fluorescents, in marbleized shades, such as powder blue, periwinkle, peach, lavender, gold and seafoam. Prints will pay tribute to aquatic life, with sea shells, shellfish and lobster motifs.

Fabrics include cotton sheeting, broadcloth, denim, twills, jerseys and interlocks. For the most part, they are 100% cotton or cotton/polyester blends. For a relaxed look, most denim will be stonewashed or whitewashed. However, suggests The Soap and Detergent Association, for the trendiest small fry, red denim might just be the next hot look.

### Kitchen Safety Message

The oven door should never be used as a seat or step stool, warns The Soap and Detergent Association. Too much weight on an open oven door can force a range to tip. Besides the obvious danger of being hurt by the range, any food cooking on top can slide off, possibly causing burns. Families with small children and senior citizens who live alone are particularly susceptible to this type of accident. Anti-tipping devices secure free-standing and slide-in models to help prevent them from tipping. However, such safety features are not a 100% safeguard against accidents. To prevent accidents, some precautions should be taken. The oven door should always be closed when not in use. And, children should be taught to operate the range safely. Most importantly, children should be supervised whenever using the range. ■

**WHAT'S NEW?**

Semi-disposable party goods are an inexpensive, convenient, reusable alternative to paper cups and plates. Made from sturdy, crystal polystyrene, the plastic is dishwasher safe and can be recycled.

The Great Events line includes luncheon plates, dinner plates, bowls, tumblers and cutlery in clear, black and red combinations.

(Anchor Hocking Plastics; P.O. Box 64610; 224 Ryan Avenue; St. Paul, MN 55164)

This stackable bin system, for curbside pickup of recyclable goods, includes many convenience features. Removable lids can be locked in open or closed positions. For easy sorting, openings are wide and unobstructed. Even when the units are stacked together, lids and openings are both easily accessible. A built-in dolly makes it easy to transport the space-saving Recycling System. (Tucker Housewares; 25 Tucker Drive; Leominster, MA 01453)

Now food cooked in the microwave can have the same browned surface as food prepared in a conventional oven. Available on Sharp's Carousel series, this feature gives a top-brown finish to dishes such as casseroles, cakes and meats.

(Sharp Electronics; Sharp Plaza; Mahwah, NJ 07430)

Scrub 'N Store features an abrasive scrubber for washing pots, pans and other difficult-to-clean surfaces and one non-abrasive scrubber for Silver-Stone, Teflon and microwaves. The two are packaged in a twin soap-dish-like, reusable and disposable tray.

(Suburbanite Industries; P.O. Box 1000; 311 Hopping Brook Road; Holliston, MA 01746) . ■

**DETERGENTS-IN DEPTH  
SDA Needs Your Ideas**

SDA is planning another DETERGENTS-IN DEPTH videoconference for Spring 1992. Because of the high interest in environmental issues, we have decided to devote the conference to household cleaning products and their relationship to the environment. We are in the preliminary planning stages and need your help to make the program valuable to you. Please complete and return the following form. We will try to incorporate your ideas into the conference. Watch for further details in future issues of CLEANLINESS FACTS!

1. Rate the following environmental topics in order of their interest to you (#1 = most important)

Water Conservation \_\_\_\_\_ Energy Conservation \_\_\_\_\_ Safety of Cleaning Product Ingredients \_\_\_\_\_  
Disposal of Cleaning Products \_\_\_\_\_ Disposal of Cleaning Product Packaging \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. List any environmental questions you would like to have answered. Please ask questions related to household cleaning products and appliances only. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

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3. Other comments, suggestions. Use another sheet of paper, if necessary.

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Return to: Jane Meyer; The Soap and Detergent Association; 475 Park Avenue South; New York, NY 10016





## "KEEP IT CLEAN" BRIEFS

Most cutlery is dishwasher safe, however, it is better to hand wash fine knives and dry them immediately. Do not soak knife blades in water.

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Blot—do not rub—the soiled area when attempting to remove a stain. Rubbing will spread the stain and may damage the fabric.

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Dry white fabrics away from natural sunlight. Modern fabrics contain fluorescent brighteners which react in the sun. Rather than bleaching them, the sunlight may cause fabrics to be permanently yellowed.

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One ingredient in acne medications, benzoyl peroxide, can destroy fabric dyes. After applying such medications, wash hands thoroughly to remove any residue before handling or touching fabrics. This ingredient may be difficult to remove so wash hands very thoroughly.

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This paper is made from 50% recycled fibers that include post-consumer waste.

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Ski apparel made of Entrant, should be washed in cold water and air dried. Entrant is a 100% nylon fabric treated on the back side with a breathable, waterproof finish. The finish may be removed if the garment is dry cleaned.

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Rayon and rayon-blend fabrics are becoming more popular. The first rule in caring for rayon fabrics is to read the care label. Most can be machine washed and tumble dried but will shrink unless a pre-shrinking finish has been applied. The only way to be assured of the proper cleaning procedure is to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

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Many down-filled garments can be successfully laundered. First, read care label instructions to determine the recommended cleaning method. For garments that can be machine washed, use the gentle cycle and do not overload the washer. Dry thoroughly using a low heat setting on the dryer. A clean tennis ball or tennis shoe placed in the dryer with the garment will help refluff the down. ■

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