



CLEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

475 Park Avenue South New York, New York 10016

SPRING CLEANING

Making Homes Cleaner and Safer

A thorough spring cleaning does more than rid your house of clutter. It also makes it a safer place to live. In fact, when it comes to preventing fires and accidental injuries in the home, cleanliness and safety go hand in hand reports The Soap and Detergent Association.

When newspapers, magazines, boxes, unused furniture, toys, supplies, clothing and similar items are left out in the open, there's danger of slipping, bumping and tripping. But, even if they are hidden from view, other dangers remain. Common storage areas - attics, basements and under stairways - easily become danger zones where fires can start or spread rapidly. As a preventative measure, go through and sort out what you really need. From the discard pile, give away what's usable, recycle what's suitable and throw away the rest. Organize the things you are keeping into safe, convenient storage areas.

Cleaning supplies, tools, home improvement materials and the like should all have specific storage areas. Stack things neatly. Keep doors and draws closed. Consider hanging frequently used household tools on pegboards, putting the board in convenient reach of adults, but high enough that dangerous tools are not within the reach of small children.

To avoid accidents, discard containers with small amounts of left-over paint and solvents. Contact your local sanitation department for advice on safe disposal. Be sure to store them off the ground and away from pets and children until they can be discarded.

Regular cleaning routines can eliminate potential dangers. Dust from the floor and from the vacuum cleaner should be wrapped and discarded in the trash can. Because this seemingly harmless material can be hazardous,

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keep it away from open fires. When emptying ashtrays, make sure all cigarettes and matches are extinguished. Make it a point to empty trash cans and wastebaskets regularly.

As you clean, develop the habit of returning tools and supplies to their proper places. Future cleaning and repair work will go faster if everything you need is where it should be. ■





SAFE FOOD HANDLING

From Shopping to Reheating

Food poisoning is more common than you think. In fact, many times what we call the flu is really the unpleasant result of a foodborne illness. Because health experts estimate that 85% of these cases could be prevented, The Soap and Detergent Association offers some simple guidelines for handling food properly.

Safe food handling begins when you shop. Plan your errands so the grocery store is the last stop. While there, choose carefully. Avoid canned goods with dents, cracks or bulging lids. Any of these symptoms could indicate potentially serious food poisoning. Buy cold food last. Refrigerated food should be cold to the touch; frozen food should be rock solid. Check the use-by date. If you don't think you'll use it before then, don't buy it. Take the food straight home from the check-out counter to your refrigerator. Never, ever leave food in a hot car.

Soon-to-be-cooked raw meat, poultry or fish should be refrigerated in its package on a plate. Otherwise, the raw juices, which often contain bacteria, may drip on other food. Freeze any fresh meat, poultry or fish that will not be used in a few days. When it's time to use these items, thaw them in the microwave or the refrigerator. Do not thaw on the kitchen counter where bacteria can grow in the outer layers of the food before the inside thaws. Marinate in the refrigerator, too.

Be sure to keep raw meat, poultry and fish, as well as their juices, from coming in contact with other foods. For example, after cutting chicken, wash your hands, cutting board and knife in hot soapy water, then cut the vegetables. Use plastic cutting boards, not wooden ones that can harbor bacteria.

Bacteria can live in other places besides cutting boards and food. Kitchen towels, sponges and cloths should be washed frequently. Sponges should be replaced every few weeks. And, be sure to wash your hands using hot soapy water before handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers and playing with pets.

From the standpoint of safety, you may be taking a chance when you eat hamburger that is red in the middle, rare or medium-rare steak and roast beef or any raw or partially cooked meat, fish, poultry or eggs. Only thorough cooking will kill bacteria. Red meat should be cooked to 160°F, poultry to 180°F. Use a meat thermometer to be sure. As a visual check, red meat is done when it is brown or grey inside; poultry, when the juices run clear; fish, when it can be flaked with a fork.

Salmonella, a bacteria that causes food poisoning, is a particular problem with raw eggs. To kill it, cook eggs until both yoke and white are firm, not runny. Scramble eggs to a firm texture. Avoid recipes in which eggs remain raw or partially cooked.

Microwaving is fast and convenient, but it sometimes leaves cold spots of uncooked food. To avoid this, cover food with a microwave lid or vented plastic wrap, then stir and rotate for even cooking. If the recipe calls for it, be sure to observe the standing time so the food continues to cook. To check that food is done, use the oven temperature probe or meat thermometer, inserting it at several spots.

Don't get careless just because food is cooked. Since bacteria grows quickly in warm temperatures, never leave perishable food out of the refrigerator for more than two hours. Serve food on clean dishes and utensils, not the ones used in food preparation. Put hot party food on smaller platters, then replenish from food kept in the refrigerator and warmed just before serving. Carry picnic food in a cooler with a cold pack, school lunches in an insulated carrier with a cold pack. Never leave either one in the sun or on a warm radiator.

For quick cooling and easy reheating, store leftovers in small, shallow containers. Remove stuffing from poultry or other meats and refrigerate in separate containers. To reheat, bring soups, sauces and gravies to a boil. Thoroughly reheat other leftovers to 165°F. ■

THE BATH

An Escape from Daily Cares

When times are difficult, small indulgences take on greater significance. A warm, fragrant bath, enhanced by soft music, a good book, a glass of wine, maybe even the soft glow of candlelight, is a luxurious, yet inexpensive, way to sooth away the cares of the day. To its devotees, the leisurely bath has certain restorative powers that the speedy shower will never equal.

As the bath increases in popularity, The Soap and Detergent Association notes that manufacturers of cosmetics and personal care products are developing items designed to cleanse, pamper and relax the harried bather. Scented bath products frequently include a companion line of scented bath candles, sachets and room atomizers. Honey and almond, ingredients considered excellent therapies for weather-ravaged skin, are the main ingredients in several new product lines that include bath creams and moisturizers. Foamy gels that soften as well as cleanse the skin are gaining in popularity. Even that old standby, bubble bath, is expected to do more than just make bubbles. Newer versions are designed to cleanse and nourish the skin.

Fashionable resorts of other centuries, including Bath and Baden-Baden, were famous for their carbonated water. Recent research shows that the carbon dioxide these waters contained actually helps increase blood circulation, which is the body's natural way of releasing tension and easing minor aches and pains. At least one new product, a carbonated bath tablet, is designed to recreate the benefits of nature's famous spas. When dropped in the bath, one tablet effervesces for approximately six minutes until it dissolves. The water remains carbonated, or "charged," for up to two hours. The tablets, which come lightly scented, turn the water a Caribbean blue.

Packaging, too, is designed to appeal to the consumer's sense of indulgence. Some collections include fine porcelain pieces or containers designed to simulate expensive crystal. ■

CARING FOR CERAMIC TILE

How to Keep It Beautiful

Ceramic tile is beautiful, durable and easy to maintain. These three characteristics make it a prized surface for walls and floors, particularly in high use/high traffic areas, such as kitchens, bathrooms and entryways.

There are two basic types of ceramic tiles. Glazed tile is traditionally used for wall surfaces and with extra-duty glazes for countertops and floors. Unglazed tile includes ceramic mosaic tile and quarry tile. Ceramic tile is solid porcelain tile manufactured in small geometric shapes and frequently used for floors, walls, countertops, window sills, fireplaces and swimming pools. Quarry tile is heavy duty tile, such as the familiar earthy red 6" squares used mostly for floors.

For easy bathroom maintenance, says The Soap and Detergent Association, avoid surface soil build up, such as soap scum, hard water film and mildew. Tile walls, vanity tops and floors will stay bright if routinely wiped with a clean, damp sponge or cloth. Wipe tile shower walls down with a towel after use.

When a more thorough bathroom cleaning is required, and the water is soft, an all-purpose cleaner may do the trick. Let it stand for about five minutes, then lightly scrub with a sponge and rinse well. With hard water, use a specially formulated tub and tile cleaner. For unglazed bathroom floor tiles, scrub with a brush instead of a sponge.

In other areas of the home, glazed tile walls should be routinely wiped with a clean, damp sponge. If necessary, use a commercial window cleaner or all-purpose cleaner. Allow the surface to dry, then apply a combination silicone polish/grout sealer product. For floors, use an all-purpose cleaner, then rinse thoroughly and wipe dry.

Ceramic tiles generally require nothing more than wiping with a damp sponge. For heavier soiling or staining, use an all-purpose cleaner. Quarry tiles should be moped occasionally with an all-purpose cleaner. To prevent a dull film, rinse thoroughly. As these tiles age, maintenance decreases because a soft, shiny patina forms that keeps the floor looking fresher longer. ■





MISCELLANY

Health-enhancing Sleep Products

New developments in bed pillows and mattress pads recognize that a good night's sleep is key to good health, reports The Soap and Detergent Association. Comfort-zoned mattress pads are designed with varying degrees of support - the greatest support in the torso area, less support for the head, shoulders, legs and feet. Another pad, specially designed for waterbeds, insulates the sleeper from the cool, water-filled mattress. Combination foam and fabric pads feature a ribbed foam construction base with a removable, washable polyester cover.

Therapeutic pillows include a foam pillow with a hollow core that insures softness and a beauty facial pillow with a satin case. Its design allows the face to rest in a recessed area. Fussiness sleepers can customize their pillow with a version that allows the consumer to adjust the density by adding or removing the polyester/wool filling.

Fuzzy Logic In the Housewares Market

Fuzzy logic, a process that allows computers to respond to situations that fall in between absolute values, like "long or short," "on or off," and "full or empty," may revolutionize the way appliances and other housewares do their job. While the concept may be new to the housewares market, electronic products, such as camcorders and "point-and-shoot" cameras have been using it successfully for some time.

The Soap and Detergent Association predicts that consumers can look forward to a wide range of products based on this innovative concept. Current market offerings include a rice cooker that automatically changes cooking conditions in response to the amount of rice in the machine, a wet/dry shaver that adjusts the blade speed during shaving as facial hair conditions change, and a vacuum cleaner that adjusts its amperage level based on the amount of dirt in the carpet.

Summer Decorating Secrets

The room that looks cool will feel cooler, observes The Soap and Detergent Association. Replace winter's heavy drapes with lighter weight curtains made from sheer, gauzy fabrics such as lace, organza or chiffon that will catch the breeze. Rearrange furniture to focus on windows. If nature doesn't provide a cooling view, create your own with plants and flower-filled containers.

Put any unnecessary furniture in storage. Do without or substitute outdoor-style furniture, such as wicker or rattan. Heavy pieces that can't be removed can be disguised with light-colored throws, slipcovers or tablecloths. Banish dark accessories in favor of see-through glass vases, wicker baskets, terra cotta pieces, white paper lampshades - anything that brings the outdoors indoors. If possible, add plenty of blues and greens. These are the colors that have the strongest cooling, calming psychological effect.

The Care of Fine Wood Furnishings

To help retain the beauty of fine wood furniture, The Soap and Detergent Association offers consumers some common sense guidelines. Clean, oil and replace natural moisture by regular applications of a quality wood furniture treatment product. If your home has central heating, increase the application frequency in winter. Keep the furniture away from heat sources, such as vents, to avoid drying, and sunny windows to avoid fading. If the latter is not possible, draw the blinds during peak sunlight hours. This practice will also help protect fine wood windowsills. To even out fading, rearrange the furniture every six months or so.

Keep water away from the surface. It can raise the grain, separate the finish from the wood and cause swelling and black stains. Avoid placing hot or cold items directly on the surface. To avoid moisture that softens the finish, elevate glass tops on small felt pads and avoid leaving plastic tablecoverings on for long periods of time.

News In Major Appliances

While there is nothing totally revolutionary in the major appliance market, there are plenty of new features to dazzle the average buyer.

Cooktops and wall ovens are proliferating. Grills and griddles, currently popular features on cooking surfaces, are now available as plug-in elements.

The high end of the cooking appliance market is particularly attracted to sealed burners, smoothtops and gas-in-glass. Eurostyling and white on white are important fashion elements. Since these two trends are likely to clash with existing decors, they may be more important factors in the remodeling market than in appliance replacement sales notes The Soap and Detergent Association.

Selling points for refrigerators include larger capacities and side-by-side configurations. Specialized features, such as galloon doors, separate controls for meat, dairy and produce compartments, shelves that move freely, internal wine racks and external water and ice dispensers, have great consumer appeal.

Removing Rusty Water Stains

The source of those rust stains that invade your laundry may not be as mysterious as you think. They are probably caused by iron or rust in the water or pipes. Here are several ways to discourage them. Run hot and cold tap water for a few minutes before starting the wash cycle to clear the pipes. To keep sediment from settling on your laundry, avoid overloading or crowding clothes in the washing machine. Drain the hot water heater occasionally to remove bottom sediment. If the stains continue, consult your plumber about installing an iron filter system that will tap into your plumbing.

To remove existing stains, use a rust-removing agent, carefully following the package instructions. These products are safe to use in the sink or the washing machine. Wash the garment afterward using a laundry detergent. Never use bleach to eliminate rust stains, cautions The Soap and Detergent Association. It will set the stain and intensify the discoloration. ■

WHAT'S NEW?

Seat Mates keeps everything you need for driving comfort within easy reach. The plastic tray, designed to sit on the passenger seat, has convenient compartments for food, drink, cassette tapes and coins. An adjustable top accommodates various size drink containers. Available in charcoal, blue, and red, the unit folds flat for easy storage.

(Rubber Queen; 280 Cramer Creek Court; Dublin, OH 43017)

CanTop It snaps onto the top of a soda can. Features include a flip-top lid to keep the soda carbonated and a netted spout that keeps bees and other insects and debris out. Available in six hot neon colors, the product is made from polypropylene and is dishwasher safe.

(Capital Ideas Inc.; 4040 North Calhoun Road; Brookfield, WI 53005)

With the introduction of the Super Deep Fryer, the Signature Cookware Collection has now expanded into the category of small appliances. Performance features include a charcoal filter that absorbs greasy cooking odors, a safety locking lid to prevent spills and splatters, and the wind-down basket that makes it possible to raise and lower food from the outside, without opening the lid.

(T-Fal Corporation; 208 Passaic Avenue; Fairfield, NJ 07006)

The Superseal Microwave Fish & Poultry Cooker enhances the ability of the microwave to cook fish and poultry. The microwave-safe plastic cooker has an adjustable rack to allow the microwaves to flow freely underneath thus speeding up the cooking process. The enclosed environment helps food cook more evenly and thoroughly. And, the steam/vent dial lets the user control the amount of moisture to prevent the poultry skin from becoming too moist.

(Eagle Affiliates; 101-01 Avenue "D"; Brooklyn, NY 11236) ■





"KEEP IT CLEAN" BRIEFS

Shoulder pads are an important fashion accessory. However, sometimes agitation and tumbling in the laundry can cause shifting and clumping of the filling. Detachable shoulder pads should be removed before washing. For permanently attached pads, pinning a small safety pin through each end of the pad will help maintain its shape. Pin only through the pad, don't pin the pad to the garment.

Used over a period of time, vinegar can damage the porcelain finish used on some washing machine baskets. Check with the washer manufacturer before using vinegar as a final rinse for the laundry.

Some garment care labels suggest hand washing instead of machine washing. This care instruction is usually given because the garment cannot hold up under excessive rubbing or agitation. Even machine washing on the gently cycle may be too much agitation for the garment. When hand washing instructions are recommended, the garment should be washed without twisting, wringing, or agitation. It should be gently squeezed by hand to remove any excess moisture and laid flat to dry.

To remove chewing gum from clothes, first apply ice to the gum, then carefully scrape it off the fabric with a dull knife. Remove any remaining stain by using a prewash stain remover or a cleaning fluid. Rinse, then launder as usual. ■

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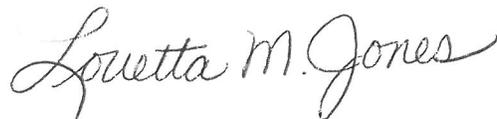
*Jane Meyer
The Soap & Detergent Association
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New York, NY 10016*

Dear Ms. Meyer:

I contacted the Whirlpool Company concerning the effect that safety pins in shoulder pads would have on the enamel of dryers. I was told that the safety pins would not damage its surface. Safety pins are considered to be similar to zippers, etc.

Thank you for this valuable tip.

Sincerely,



*Louetta M. Jones
Extension Agent, Home Economics*

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(stamped)

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