



# CLEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

475 Park Avenue South New York, New York 10016

## BEWARE THE SILENT MENACE Tips for Safe Food Handling

Warm days, picnics, al fresco dining and the desire to forego indoor chores in favor of outdoor leisure are all part of summer's appeal. The Soap and Detergent Association counsels consumers to make sure that the season's carefree attitudes don't spill over into the areas of food handling, cooking and storage. The bacteria responsible for foodborne illness are silent culprits that cannot always be seen, smelled or tasted. Vigilance and safe procedures are the best defense against their onslaught.

Safe procedures begin at the grocery store. Avoid purchasing foods past their "sell-by" or expiration dates. Stay away from packages that are torn or leaking. Plan your route through the market so that refrigerated or frozen items are chosen last, just before steering the shopping cart to the checkout counter. When the groceries are bagged, make sure raw meat and poultry are packed separately in a plastic bag. This will prevent any cross-contamination between meat juices and cooked foods or those eaten raw, such as vegetables or fruit.

Load perishable items inside the air-conditioned car, not in the hot, stuffy trunk. And head straight for home. If the trip between home and store is more than 30 minutes, transport the perishables in a cooler with ice. After arriving home, unload the perishables first, going directly from the car to the refrigerator.

Raw meat, poultry and fish should be securely wrapped and stored in the meat drawer or coldest section of the refrigerator. To slow bacterial growth, the refrigerator should be at 40°F; the freezer at 0°F. Use an appliance thermometer to check the accuracy of your unit. Fresh poultry, fish, ground meats and variety meats should be cooked or frozen within two days; other beef, lamb, veal or



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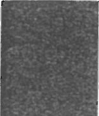
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pork, within three to five days.

For safety's sake, do not defrost meat or other perishables by leaving them out on the countertop. For slow, safe thawing, move the food to the refrigerator compartment. Make sure thawing juices do not drip on other foods. For faster thawing, place the food in a leak-proof plastic bag and submerge in cold tap water. Change the water frequently so it does not become tepid. Cook the food immediately after thawing. Foods can also be defrosted in the microwave. Here, too, cooking



**SDA**



must occur immediately after defrosting. If meat or poultry are defrosted in the refrigerator, they can be refrozen before OR after cooking. If any other defrosting method is used, the meat or poultry must be cooked before refreezing.

Wash hands before and after handling raw meat and poultry. This includes wrapping, thawing and food preparation. Use soap and warm water and scrub hands for 20 seconds.

Change kitchen towels frequently; launder the soiled ones in hot water. Dirty sponges and dishcloths can be a breeding ground for harmful bacteria, too. Clean them frequently, using soap and hot water. Then, disinfect in a solution of ¾ cup liquid bleach and one gallon water; soak for two minutes; rinse and air dry.

Use paper towels to wipe up spilled meat, poultry and fish juices. Then, clean and disinfect any soiled surfaces. To disinfect, use liquid household bleach or a disinfectant (antibacterial) kitchen cleaner, following label directions. After cutting meats, wash hands and clean and disinfect the cutting board, knife and countertops.

Meat and poultry should be thoroughly cooked: ground meat to 160°F; ground poultry to 165°F. Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops should reach 145°F; all cuts of fresh pork, 160°F. Whole poultry should reach 180°F in the thigh; breasts, 170°F.

Because bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses grow rapidly at room temperature, equal care should be taken when serving food. The basic rule is to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. For buffets, put hot foods over a heat source and cold foods on ice. Refrigerate food platters until it's time to serve or heat them. For picnics, transport and store the cold food in a cooler with a cold pack or ice. Keep it in the shade and open the lid as seldom as possible.

Put leftovers away as soon as possible after the meal is finished. Divide the foods into shallow containers for rapid cooling and store in the refrigerator or freezer. Be sure to slice turkey before refrigerating. Cut the breast meat off the bone; legs and wings can be left whole. Although freezer time varies with the food, cooked leftovers stored in the refrigerator should be used within four days. ■

## WOMEN'S FASHIONS

### It's A Long Story

For the first time in many seasons, hemlines are making fashion headlines, notes The Soap and Detergent Association. When the Fall '98 collections debuted, models paraded down the runways in ankle-hugging skirts that headed straight for the floor. Neither kick pleats nor slits were in sight. Variations were wrapped, elliptically curved or pleated. Fabrics ran the luxury gamut, from felted wools to cashmeres, from upright tweeds to sensuous satins. And pants joined in, going fuller and softer, creating the illusion of a trouser-skirt.

For perfect pairing, sweaters have never been better. The treatments are endless: big and bulky; closely fitted; long cardigans; short cardigans; hooded sweatshirts; classic short sleeve pullovers; twin sets; and fur collar trims. Breathtaking evening looks include close-to-the-body cashmere sweaters over long, slim beaded skirts. It's a combination that epitomizes the season's tone: part casual/part dressy.

Shoes go high or low, with no middle ground. Flats, especially those executed in fabric, look freshest and make good sense with the longer skirts. When only heels will do, the direction is high and delicate. Aerodynamically correct, space-age athletic shoes pay homage to performance sports apparel – a trend that predominates in both men's and women's activewear.

For the career customer, the relaxed jacket is the late '90s alternative to the blazer. Fly fronts and zip-fronts replace traditional button fronts. Felted cashmere, wool voile and gabardine are among the favored fabrics.

Fur—both real and fake—is everywhere: fur-collars on sweaters and suits, sleeveless fur jackets, fake seal parkas, chincilla-printed rabbit fur skirts, broadtail pants, fox neck warmers, dry-cleanable mink trims. The coats that count include double-faced wool beauties, shearling bombers, quilted parkas, jersey capes, and below-the-knee reefers.

Black is so entrenched that it scarcely bears mentioning. Gray leads the pack of new fall colors. Winter whites, medium-toned blues and firework reds follow close behind. ■

## MEN'S FASHIONS

### High Performance Sets the Pace

Whether it's for climbing a mountain or for climbing the ladder of success, the hottest category in sportswear centers around high tech activewear executed in high performance fabrics. Various referred to as street active, athleisurewear or lifestyle apparel, these clothes are equally at home on sidewalks and ski slopes, reports The Soap and Detergent Association. Field jackets, zipped polo cardigans, jackets with zip-off sleeves, fleece tops, mountain climbing jackets with a drop-down panel for hunkering down on a rocky cliff or a frigid stadium seat are part of a trend that is equally driven by fabric and fashion. For example, a microfiber fabric, originally developed for liners in sleeping bags and gloves, has been knitted, double-napped and fashioned into shirts. CoolMax, a specialty polyester filament, was created to transport moisture away from the body during strenuous workouts. It's wrinkle-resisting, fast-drying properties have made it an appealing choice for slacks and shirts.

Sport-specific apparel has its place, too. The craze for indoor cycling classes has inspired a line of padded cycling shorts and T-shirts. Skateboarding and in-line skating are the impetus for jeans with knee pouches that camouflage protective pads.

In the more traditional sportswear arena, velour and rib-free corduroy are back, giving new life to polo shirts and button-down shirts. Solids take a back seat to printed plaids, houndstooths, paisleys and checks. Sweaters are strong, particularly in the young men's market, where they have replaced the plaid shirts for youthful dress-up. Berber knits, Nordic patterns, Shetland crewnecks, ribbed and cabled turtlenecks, show up in chunky textures over cargo pants and slimmed-down jeans.

When only a suit will do, the look is wool flannel in a three-button silhouette with side vents or a matching vest. Neckwear news focuses on retro '50s weaves, motifs and jacquards updated in '90s colorations. And the sport coat is returning to its roots, forsaking recent sartorial versions for fabrics that look equally at home with dress slacks, jeans and khakis. ■

## UNIFORMLY GREAT

### News in Children's Fashions

More and more public schools systems are instituting either mandatory or voluntary uniform policies. This course of action is exerting a strong influence on the back-to-school market. Manufacturers are scrambling to develop clothing lines that meet the standards these school systems deem acceptable. Until the dismissal bell rings, classic conservatism rules the day in polo shirts, woven tops, wrinkle-resistant pants and skirts at moderate prices and in a variety of colors, including navy, khaki, white and green.

Traditional styling is key in the non-uniform arena, too, observes The Soap and Detergent Association. Thick cotton sweaters, denim, khaki, corduroys and barn-style jackets are among the favored looks. Jazzy touches include carpenter-style jeans and overalls, bright contrast topstitching, a multitude of pockets, sporty athletic stripes, and shiny nylon outerwear. High-tech fabrics, including reflective finishes and stretch materials, give familiar silhouettes an updated look.

Footwear gets an A+ for style and color. Thick, rugged soles are the definitive fashion statement, giving shoes and boots a more outdoors look. Fabrications include plush suede, sleek leather and corduroy. For putting one's best foot forward, wine and berry are the colors to choose.

No matter what the age, fabrics with feel have great appeal. Sherpa, soft fleece and terry abound, sometimes in unexpected looks such as terrycloth coats. Fashionable young ladies are craving marabou trims, fake furs, and washed linens with a "who cares if it wrinkles?" attitude. The toddler crowd likes three-dimensional appliqués, such as fake fur hearts and crocheted daisies. Favored dressy looks feature sheer fabrics layered over stark, body-contouring silhouettes.

Other trends to watch for include cyber treatment prints with a vibrating effect similar to images on a computer screen, skate-inspired apparel, military- and Asian-inspired themes and a profusion of plaids. ■



## MISCELLANY

### Fresh Innovations for Familiar Products

Making a good product better is a matter of thoughtful innovation, rather than flashy design. The Soap and Detergent Association notes several examples, including a salad spinner that can be operated with one hand. A simple press on its non-slip knob sets the spinning action in a motion. To stop, just press the brake. Another spinner manufacturer is offering a small insert basket that allows the user to spin dry delicate foods, such as berries, without mashing them.

The old standby electric skillet has been redesigned as a detachable skillet surrounded by a heat-resistant casing. The result is easier cleaning and safer cooking.

And from another manufacturer comes a miniaturized milk frother for those who crave latte on the go. This portable frother is small enough to fit in a purse.

For tea drinkers, a combination infuser and spoon is designed for brewing and stirring individual mugs of tea.

### Prevent Rust-Ruined Appliances

Although rust can appear anywhere there is moisture, appliances in areas that combine a moist climate and salt air are particularly vulnerable. This includes the southeast area of the U.S., near the eastern and western coastlines and around the Gulf of Mexico.

Once rust sets in, warns The Soap and Detergent Association, it is difficult to stop. Therefore, it is important pay attention to measures that will prevent rust from occurring. Keep the appliance in a dry place. In a warm, humid climate, this means an air-conditioned room, rather than a porch or breezeway. Keep the appliance clean. Wipe it frequently, using a clean, damp cloth and a mild, non-abrasive cleaner. For additional protection against moisture and dirt, apply a coat of paste car wax. If the item is scratched, immediately apply touch-up paint so there's no chance for rust to form and spread.

### Safety Tips for Irons

Because the iron is such a familiar household appliance, consumers often overlook the dangers it poses as a potential source of house fires and burns. An iron with an automatic shut-off can help minimize these hazards, stresses The Soap and Detergent Association. Because the soleplate can reach a temperature as high as 428°F, the safest shut-offs are those that work after a minute or two of non-use in the face down position and after several minutes in the upright position.

Proper use is also important. A plugged-in iron should never be left unattended with children around. The iron should be unplugged after use and it should be thoroughly cooled — in a spot that's out the reach of children — before it's put away. A retractable cord will eliminate several hazards, including the danger of a child tripping over the cord or yanking on it and knocking the iron over.

### The Fine Art of Tableware

While many successful products in the housewares market are oriented toward consumers' high tech sensibilities, others appeal to a desire for handcrafted pieces. This is particularly evidenced by the popularity of handpainted dinnerware. Much of the current crop comes from Asian countries, where labor is less expensive than in Portugal or Italy and high volume orders are more easily filled. The rough-hewn look and occasional imperfections of brush stroke all add to the products' crafted ambience.

This hot trend is spilling over into other tableware areas. Companies limited to machine capabilities are producing dinnerware patterns that mimic the brushstroke look. Handpainted glassware and flatware, sometimes coordinated to the dinnerware, are also lending themselves to the artistic touch.

Because these handpainted products may not be dishwasher safe, The Soap and Detergent Association cautions consumers to check the manufacturer's care instructions. ■

## Q & A

### SDA Answers Your Questions

**Q: My fabric softener leaves a residue on the dispenser. How can I remove it?**

A: Sometimes liquid fabric softener does build up around the dispenser. Check the washer manual instructions for removing the buildup.

If there are no instructions for removing fabric softener buildup, make a solution of 1 Tablespoon liquid laundry detergent and ½ gallon hot water, then;

If you have a removable dispenser:

- Using a pail or the sink, soak the dispenser overnight in the solution.
- Brush off any remaining buildup, using a scrub brush or a bottle brush.

If you cannot remove the dispenser:

- Pour the solution into the fabric dispenser and let it stand overnight.
- Run your washer through the rinse cycle two or three times, putting warm or hot water in the dispenser.

To help prevent a heavy fabric softener build up, dilute the fabric softener before adding it to the rinse water, and periodically clean the dispenser.

**Q: Which is better, a fabric softener used in the rinse water or one used in the dryer?**

A: It depends on the qualities you want in a fabric conditioner. Fabric conditioners soften, freshen, provide static control and some even provide stain protection. If *softening* clothes is the most important quality for you, a liquid fabric softener added to the rinse water is better than a sheet used in the dryer. This is because liquid softeners rinse through the entire wash. Dryer sheets only soften those areas that the sheet actually touches.

On the other hand, if you're more interested in controlling *static cling*, a dryer sheet works better. This is because they work in the dryer, where static starts.

If you want the maximum softening *and* static cling control, use both types of fabric conditioners. ■

## WHAT'S NEW?

One handy hanger that does the work of many more is the Ultimate Hanger. It conserves closet space by storing an entire outfit, including belt, scarf and tie, on one hanger. The elliptical hanger can hold 20 times the weight of an average tubular hanger without bending or sagging. It's constructed from a variety of recycled materials, including Environ, a material made from soybeans and recycled newspaper.

(Beyond Design 2; 935 W. Chestnut Street #301; Chicago, IL 60622)

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Brushes, bowls and basters may all be relatively efficient means of applying cooking oil, but cleanup is another matter. Enter the Misto oil sprayer which dispenses oil in a fine spray. The stainless, dripless dispenser never comes in direct contact with the food so it minimizes the possibility of transmitting food bacteria.

(Liquid Motion, Inc.; 109 Kettle Creek; Weston, CT 06883)

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Here are two common scenarios. Grab the house keys, turn off the lights and go out the door. Or enter the house, turn on the lights and deposit the keys. So where is a logical resting place for house keys? Near the light switch, which is exactly the location offered by the Key Hook Wallplate, a toggle switch plate with key hooks along its lower edge. The hooks are offset to prevent keys from scratching the walls.

(American Tack & Hardware Co.; 25 Robert Pitt Drive; Monsey, NY 10952)

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The Casual Dining Lap Tray provides comfort and convenience. Its soft pillow bottom conforms to the lap of the user. The non-skid placemat on top helps prevents spills and is removable for easy cleaning. It's perfect for breakfast in bed or lunch on a lap, for dormitories, apartment dwellers, picnics and parties.

(Creative Manufacturing, Inc.; 1016 W. Harris Road; Arlington, TX 76001) ■





## “KEEP IT CLEAN” BRIEFS

Clean from the top down. Dust top shelves before lower ones and clean tables before cleaning the floor. Dust falls as you stir it up; when you clean the floors last, all the dust and soil are removed.

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The treatment for removing paint spills depends on whether the paint is water or oil based. For water-based paints, just rinse in warm water then launder. However, removal must be done while the paint is still wet. Once dry, these paints are permanent.

For oil-based paints, check the paint can label, then treat the stain with the solvent recommended as a paint thinner. If the label is not available, use turpentine. Remember to test the solvent on an inconspicuous area of the garment first. Rinse, then pretreat with a prewash stain remover and launder.

A dryer can remove wrinkles or creases from some washable stored garments and tablecloths. Put the dry items you want to “de-wrinkle” in the dryer and run them on the permanent press cycle. Don’t overload the dryer, as the garments need room to move around. Remove the items and hang immediately after the dryer stops.

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Fabric softeners give fabrics a soft feel and help reduce static cling. Static cling is a particular problem for synthetic fabrics and permanent press items.

Liquid fabric softeners are especially good for providing *softening*. They should be added to the final rinse cycle. Softener sheets are used in the dryer and are especially good for reducing *static cling*. ■

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