



CLEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

1500 K Street NW, Suite 300 Washington, DC 20005

www.cleaning101.com

SDA'S SPRING CLEANING SURVEY Kitchens, Living Rooms at Top of List

When the weather gets warm, the call to spring cleaning seems to be a universal urge. But, according to a recent survey by The Soap and Detergent Association, when they heed the call, men and women turn to different parts of the house. Women indicated that the most rewarding rooms to clean are the kitchen and the bathroom. Men give high marks to the basement and the garage — the two areas designated the least rewarding by women in the survey. The urge to clean is age related, and different for the two sexes. Women ages 35-54 and men ages 18-24 and 55-64 are most likely to clean.

Nearly two-thirds of the American population engages in the spring cleaning ritual. Top priority goes to the kitchen, the living room, the master bedroom and the bathrooms. But it's not a planned, systematic cleaning. Instead, it's "event cleaning," — cleaning that people feel just can't be put off anymore.

With this spring cleaning comes results that are both aesthetically pleasing and have health benefits. Regular cleaning eliminates or reduces the allergens that trigger allergies and asthma. Because no single product can provide optimum performance on all surfaces and soils, it's important to select the right product for the job. Key to doing this is reading and following product labels, which provide information and directions for use.

Many specialized convenience products make any cleaning faster and easier. For example, antibacterial products with germ-fighting formulations, can be found in many categories of cleaning products, including kitchen and bathroom cleaners, as well as many commonly used hand soaps.

Wipes and disposable towelettes that can be thrown away with the germs, are a new cleaning product category that has been embraced by people who value convenience. Glass, furniture, floors and leather upholstery are just a few of the surfaces that benefit from these easy-clean aids. Also popular are single-use dust mitts. These dry

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cloths fit over the hand and are discarded after use. Similarly, special mops use electrostatic, disposable cloths or sheets to clean dusty or soiled floors. The moist cloths contain a cleaning solution that dissolves the soil, while the disposable pad absorbs the solution.

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Look for SDA at the upcoming conventions!

- American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) in Dallas, Texas
- National Association of School Nurses (NASN) in Lake Buena Vista, Florida



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Aromatherapy is now as likely to be associated with cleaning products as with home fragrances. New scents, especially fruits, flowers and herbal bouquets, complement the traditional lemon and pine scents. When spring cleaning is finished, homes not only look great, but smell wonderful.

In the SDA survey, 22 percent of the women and 11 percent of the men reported that they were too busy to clean. The Soap and Detergent Association offers some suggestions for anyone in the same situation. First, schedule time to clean. Put it on the agenda in advance, just as for any business or personal appointment. Next, prioritize the list of jobs needed to be done, then list the cleaning supplies needed to complete them. To save shopping time, make use of regular grocery and drug store visits to keep the cleaning supply closet fully stocked.

Choosing the right cleaning supplies is a simple, three-step process. First, check out the soils and surfaces. Is there grease on the stove? Is there mildew on the shower door? Are there mineral deposits on bathroom and kitchen fixtures? Identifying the dirt and the surface it resides on helps identify the type of cleaning product needed. Today's beautiful surfaces offer many options in home decor, but they also require a bit of thought about how to safely clean them. For example, ammonia-based products may be harmful to brass bathroom fixtures, but would be fine on chrome. Fabric upholstery requires a different cleaning product than leather upholstery.

Next, consider personal preference and frequency of cleaning. For example, spray cleaners might be preferable for frequent light cleanings, but dilutable products might be a better choice for large jobs like walls and floors.

The third step is to read the product labels. They are the best source of information for choosing a cleaner. Mildew remover ... oven cleaner ... glass cleaner ... the name itself usually says what the product will do. The back of the label will explain the types of soils the product is formulated to remove and the surfaces it should or shouldn't be used on. Labels provide just about everything you need to know about a cleaning product and its safe and effective use.

For detailed information on household cleaning products, visit www.cleaning101.com. ■

SUNSCREEN IN THE WASHING MACHINE Laundry Additives Provide UV Protection

With more than one million cases of skin cancer diagnosed each year, common sense dictates the need for protection from the sun. Two types of ultraviolet (UV) rays are associated with skin cancer. UVB rays can cause visible burns. UVA rays penetrate more deeply into the skin, causing it to age. Sunscreen is a necessity but, by itself, may not be enough. The Soap and Detergent Association reports that there is a special laundry additive that washes in sun protection and helps block more than 96 percent of the sun's harmful UV rays from reaching the skin.

This is an important development because clothing alone may not provide adequate protection. Harmful UV rays can penetrate fabric, leaving even covered skin vulnerable to sun damage. For example, white cotton T-shirts only provide an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) of five. The recommended UPF is 15. When clothing is treated with a sunscreen additive, the UPF increases to 30.

Although commercially produced sun-protective clothing is available, these garments are relatively expensive. A laundry additive may be more economical and makes it possible to transform almost any washable garment into a sun-protective one. The exceptions are 100 percent polyester and acrylic fabrics. Although these fibers will not absorb the laundry additive, they naturally offer a relatively high level of sun protection.

The active ingredient in the additive is a new UV protectant, TINOSORB™ FD. When used in a regular wash load, it penetrates the fibers and absorbs UV light rather than allowing it to pass through the fabric. The additive works best in warm or hot water. Do not use chlorine bleach during the first treatment, although it may be used in subsequent laundering. The invisible protection doesn't change the character of the fabric, and lasts for about 20 launderings.

In addition to a sunscreen rated SPF 15 or higher and sun-protective fabrics, there are other steps one can take to minimize the harmful effects of the sun. These include wearing a wide brim hat, sunglasses that block UV rays, long sleeved shirts and pants and avoiding the sun between 10 AM and 4 PM. ■

THE WELL-STOCKED CLEANING CABINET

Matching the Product to the Need

The well-stocked cleaning cabinet should contain a collection of products designed to cover basic cleaning needs. The Soap and Detergent Association has compiled a list of key cleaning supplies to have on hand. Within each category of basics there are options to consider. For example, some products have antibacterial properties for fighting germs. This is a particularly useful attribute for households with small children, an elderly person or a sick family member. Method of application is another consideration. For example, similar products may be available in trigger spray, aerosol or liquid form. Fragrance can also influence one's preference for a product. Citrus, pine, herb, fruit or floral scents add pleasing aromas to many cleaning products.

All-purpose cleaners are first on the list of basics.

Nonabrasive cleaners are designed to handle general cleaning. Powdered or liquid dilutable cleaners are most often used on large surfaces, such as painted walls, floors, countertops and woodwork. Spray cleaners are designed for quick cleanups on smaller areas, such as chrome fixtures, appliances, cooktops, and the wall and woodwork area, around doorknobs and switch plates.

Disinfectants, which kill germs on surfaces, come in two forms. Some are purely disinfectants. In order for these products to be effective, the surface must be free of visible soil. Disinfectant cleaners contain both antimicrobial and cleaning agents, thus they both clean surfaces and kill germs. Choice is a matter of personal preference. Read the label before using.

Abrasive cleansers are designed to remove relatively small amounts of soil often found in small areas. They contain some type of built-in abrasion which cuts down on the need for hard rubbing. Powdered abrasive cleansers may contain some special agents to remove oily soils, mold and mildew stains, or rust stains. Liquid cleansers, which contain abrasive particles suspended in a thickened liquid, are usually gentler than powders. Scouring pads are designed to work on tough stains and soils. Some come impregnated with a cleaning mixture of their own. The pads are made from a variety of

materials, including fine steel wool, copper, nylon, or plastic. One version, a cellulose sponge with a polyurethane backing, minimizes the possibility of scratching surfaces.

Liquid household bleach (sodium hypochlorite) can be used as a laundry additive to whiten clothes and as a cleaning aid to kill germs and fungi, including molds and mildew.

Specialty cleaning products are designed for specific uses. **Tub, tile, and sink cleaners** remove not only the normal soils found on bathroom and kitchen surfaces, but also hard water deposits, soap scum, rust stains and discoloration due to mold growth.

Drain opening products come in two forms. Traditional drain openers are used to unclog the drain. Buildup removers are formulated to prevent the grease and soap scum buildup that causes clogged drains. Regular use of the latter may eliminate the need for a traditional drain opener.

Dusting products come as trigger sprays or aerosols that dispense the product into a fine spray. Also available are cloths that have been imbedded with active ingredients that attract, pick up and retain light dust and soils. These are suitable for furniture, but may make floors slippery. Electrostatic cloths have a surface that attracts the soil without leaving any residue. This makes them suitable for both furniture and floors.

The choice of **floor care cleaning products** depends on the type of flooring material. For example, the same product that's suitable for wood floors may not be suitable for linoleum or ceramic tile. New flooring materials usually come with manufacturers' recommendations as to the optimum type of care. Use this information (if available) plus the information on the floor care product labels as a guide to selecting the most suitable cleaning products.

Glass cleaners are formulated to clean glass surfaces without leaving residual soil or product. Combination glass and multi-surface cleaners are effective on a variety of kitchen surfaces.

Additional items for the well stocked cleaning cabinet include a toilet bowl cleaner, an oven cleaner (unless one has a self-cleaning oven), an upholstery cleaner and metal cleaners. Check the label to match the cleaner to the type of metal (brass, silver, copper, etc.) being cleaned. ■





GARMENT CARE LABELS

The Key to Successful Cleaning

The Permanent Care Labeling Rule states that all textile clothing sold in the U.S. must include a permanent label that provides complete care information. These care instructions must apply to all parts of the garment, including the outer shell, lining, buttons, interfacing, sewing thread and all trim. In addition, explains The Soap and Detergent Association, this law only applies to apparel made from fabric. Non-fabric apparel, such as leather and fur garments, is not covered.

When the Permanent Care Labeling Rule was first established, care labels contained only written instructions. Several years ago, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) changed the ruling to allow manufacturers to use symbols instead of written instructions. For the first 18 months this rule was in effect, the symbols were accompanied by written information. Now that people have become accustomed to the symbols, manufacturers may use them without any written words.

There are many advantages to using these symbols. They're universal, which means that everyone, regardless of an ability to read English, can understand the symbols. Since the symbols take up less space than words, the new care labels are smaller, thus more comfortable. The new symbols also offer some important economic benefits to U.S. apparel manufacturers. Using one label for the three NAFTA countries (Canada, Mexico and the U.S.) may reduce manufacturing and inventory costs. These symbols will also prepare manufacturers for further international harmonization of care labels — an important step in facilitating global competitiveness.

Various segments of the apparel and garment care industries, including detergent, textile, apparel and appliance manufacturers, have been working with the FTC to familiarize consumers with the symbols. As part of this effort, The Soap and Detergent Association produced "Your Guide to Fabric Care Symbols." This guide is available to consumers by visiting www.cleaning101.com. For quick reference, print and post it in the laundry room where it's easily visible. If the care label indicates "dry-clean only," the item should be dry-cleaned following the garment manufacturer's instructions. ■

MISCELLANY

Cleaning Hardwood Floors

To keep hardwood floors looking beautiful, regular cleaning is essential says The Soap and Detergent Association. The goal is to remove dirt and grime that not only looks unsightly but can also wear away the finish.

The first step is regular vacuuming and dusting. Here, electrostatic cloths are useful. Unlike regular dust cloths that simply move the dust around, these dry, disposable cloths attract soil without leaving any residue. Dust and dirt is removed and trapped in the cloth and then discarded.

For quick and easy cleanups, premoistened, disposable cleaning cloths are a rinse-free way to remove dirt. Look for a cartridge system that attaches to a floor-cleaning appliance. The cartridge uniformly dispenses a cleaning solution that boasts the effectiveness of the cloth. This system is designed for finished wood floors, not oil, wax-finished, or unfinished wood floors.

For heavy soils, use a wood cleaner.

Wedding Gown Preservation

Every wedding gown is high in sentimental value, notes The Soap and Detergent Association. Proper cleaning and storage methods will slow down the aging process, minimize the yellowing of certain fabrics and protect the fabric from light.

Even the neatest bride should have the gown cleaned prior to storage. Otherwise, invisible stains from food, beverages and body oils will show up over time. If the trim can't withstand dry cleaning, remove it before cleaning, and then reattach it.

Store the cleaned gown in a cool, dry place, such as under the bed. Avoid basements, which may be damp, and attics, which are often hot.

The gown may be stored on a hanger and wrapped in a protective white sheet or muslin. Don't use the plastic bags that come from the dry cleaners. It may also be wrapped in white, acid-free tissue paper and packed in a box. Either way, stuff the bodice with white, acid-free tissue paper to prevent wrinkles and creases. Remove fabric-covered buttons, pins, sponge padding and perspiration shields. If left in contact with the gown, they may damage the fabric.

Non-interchangeable Cleaning Products

When it comes to cleaning products, care must be taken to use each product for its intended purpose. Read and follow the label directions. Otherwise, the results can range from disappointing to dangerous, explains The Soap and Detergent Association.

A good example of this “no substitutes” rule is detergent. Detergents come in liquid and granular versions and are formulated for specific uses: laundry, hand dishwashing or automatic dishwashing. Do not substitute a laundry detergent or hand dishwashing liquid for an automatic dishwashing product. The suds created by laundry and hand dishwashing detergents interfere with the mechanical action of the dishwasher. They smother the water action necessary for effective cleaning. In addition, the extra suds will spill out onto the floor, creating a mess and a safety hazard.

Hand dishwashing detergents are not formulated for the washing machine or for cleaning floors — they are too high sudsing. After laundering, clothes may contain a residue that makes them look dingy. When used on floors, the residue may make the floor slippery.

Handwashing Tips

Summer is travel time and picnic time. Eating out of doors and on the go doesn't diminish the need for good handwashing, cautions The Soap and Detergent Association. Some diseases are spread when disease-causing organisms on someone's hands get into food that they touch. Thorough hand washing is the best way to prevent this.

Wet hands with warm, running water. Move hands away from the water, add soap and rub them together to make a lather. Thoroughly scrub hands, wrists, fingernails and between fingers for at least 15 seconds. Rinse and dry hands with a clean towel. Durable, disposable paper towels are also a good idea because the germs can be thrown away.

For travel and picnic situations where water isn't available, disposable wipes or a hand gel sanitizer are good alternatives. The alcohol in the gel kills germs on the hands. Both wipes and gels are available in most supermarkets or drugstores and are a good addition to the picnic basket and the car's glove compartment. ■

Q & A

SDA Answers Your Questions

Q: Will wiping my kitchen surfaces with a sponge remove bacteria?

A: No. In fact, sponges provide an inviting environment for bacteria. In fact, the average used kitchen sponge harbors 7.2 billion bacteria! Harmful microorganisms will multiply under the following conditions:

1. When there's moisture.
2. When a surface is very easy for bacteria to cling to.
3. When there's a steady supply of nutrients, which food scraps provide.

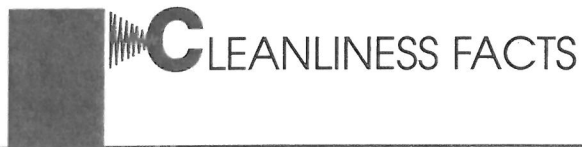
Bacteria can survive for days — even weeks — in a sponge. Then, those same bacteria can spread around the kitchen as you wipe surfaces. As a precaution, it's best to frequently wash sponges and dishcloths in the hot cycle of your washing machine. Using clean paper towels can also help prevent the spread of germs.

Q: I recently had poison ivy. How should I treat the clothes I wore to prevent getting the rash again?

A: Laundering is a good way to remove poison ivy residue from clothing. In fact, it's the preferred cleaning method because the clothes are washed and rinsed several times during the laundering process. It's best to wear gloves and wash the contaminated clothing separately so the poison ivy residue won't spread to other clothing. Casual contact with your clothing should be okay. Use soap and water to immediately wash any body areas that have had contact with the contaminated clothing. This will usually prevent a rash from developing. ■



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



"KEEP IT CLEAN" BRIEFS

Tips for safely using household cleaning products:

- Read and follow label directions for proper use, storage and disposal.
- Don't mix cleaning products. Products that are safe when used alone can sometimes cause dangerous fumes if mixed with other products.
- Don't reuse an empty household cleaning product container for any other purpose. The label instructions and precautions for the original product may be inaccurate or dangerous if used for a different product.
- Never spray any cleaning product into or around electrical outlets.
- Keep all cleaning products out of the reach of children and pets during use and storage. Empty your cleaning bucket immediately after use.

Tips for removing some common summer stains:

Blood: Soak fresh stains in cold water. Pretreat dried stains with a pretreat product or a liquid laundry detergent. Launder, using detergent and a bleach that's safe for the fabric.

Grass: Pretreat with a prewash stain remover or liquid laundry detergent. Then, launder using a bleach that's safe for the fabric.

Juice: Wash with laundry detergent and a bleach that's safe for the fabric.

Mustard: Pretreat with a prewash stain remover. Then, launder using a bleach that's safe for the fabric. ■

For more information, visit:
www.cleaning101.com