


 **CLEANLINESS FACTS**

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

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MAKE HOLIDAY TIME A SAFE TIME**Festive Meals Increase the Hazards**

With lots of cooking and entertaining at holiday time, it's easy to get caught up in the excitement and to overlook some basic safety precautions. Even cooks with decades of experience are susceptible to kitchen mishaps.

General Kitchen Safety

The Soap and Detergent Association reminds consumers that a safe kitchen begins with a clean, clutter-free environment. If things are put away in their proper place, there is less chance of accidents. Cuts and burns are just two of the possible injuries. Others include slips, sprains, falls, strains, bruises, electric shock and poisonings.

Fire and hot utensils are the most obvious dangers. The basic rule for stove safety is never leave cooking unattended. Turn pot handles so they do not hang over the front of the stove where they can be bumped or pulled down by a curious child. When lifting a pot lid, tilt it so it directs the steam away from face and hands. Use *dry* potholders to remove hot dishes from the oven or stove.

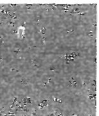
Oil and grease present special hazards. Water and hot oil do not mix; instead, they create dangerous splatters. Food should be free of water and ice when it's lowered gently into hot oil. Grease that is smoking is too hot. Smoke indicates that the grease can easily ignite. If a grease fire starts, never try to put it out with water. Extinguish it by turning off the burner and sliding a lid over the pan or using a dry-chemical fire extinguisher.

When cooking, wear short or roll-up sleeves, rather than loose, flowing garments. If clothing does catch fire, drop to the floor and roll back and forth to smother the flame. If the burns are severe, call for medical help. If minor, rinse with cool water for at least five minutes. Never treat a burn with grease, butter or ointment. They will trap the heat and make the injury worse.

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Knives are another kitchen hazard. Knives should be kept sharp, as a dull knife requires extra pressure, which increases the possibility that the blade, hand or cutting board will slip. Use knives only for cutting and not for tasks like chopping ice or prying open a container. Never soak a dirty knife in the sink - feeling around for a knife in soapy water is courting an accident. Wash, dry and put knives away immediately after use. When not in use, knives should be stored in a special slotted rack or wood block or in a separate drawer with blades pointing to the rear.



Even the general kitchen environment can be hazardous. A cabinet door left open can result in a bumped head. Worn flooring or food spills left on the floor increase the chance of slipping. Frayed extension and appliance cords increase the chance of shock or fire. Poor lighting means poor visibility, which increases the possibility of an accident. Check all these things carefully.

Test smoke detectors regularly. Many people find it easier to remember to do this at the same time they change their clocks. Keep a first aid kit handy.

A fire extinguisher that is capable of putting out both grease and electrical fires should be an essential piece of equipment in every kitchen. Store it where it is easily and quickly accessible.

Childproof the Kitchen

Children are curious all year long, but at holiday time they are more excited than usual . . . and the adults around them are more distracted than usual. If there are small children underfoot, it's particularly important to childproof the kitchen.

Keep things inaccessible. This means to use door locks on cabinets containing medicines, cleaning supplies, lighter fluid and pesticides; tightly close garbage to keep children out; and install gates at entrances to kitchens with steps. Stove shields, which detach easily for cooking, prevent children's access to burner and oven controls. These control knobs can also be removed when not in use. Install childproof plugs in unused electrical outlets and cover the garbage disposal switch with a dome-type outlet plate. Most important of all: never leave a child unattended in the kitchen. ■

FABRICS FOR THE MILLENNIUM

Familiar, Yet Different

As technology races toward the new century, The Soap and Detergent Association has been gathering information about what can be expected from the fabrics of the new millennium.

Contrary to some predicted scenarios, these fabrics will not be startling, in-your-face innovations. Instead, they will be a case of the familiar married to the unusual. Performance features and features we can feel, rather than see, will be the norm.

Comfort is key. Wicking, a property that transports moisture, particularly perspiration, away from the body, will be important for sportswear, underwear and high-end apparel fabrics. New finishes will mean increasingly wrinkle-free, washable linens with different hands, including stretch and crinkle. Stretch itself will continue to grow with Spandex® as only one of many special stretch fibers. Unique weaving and knitting techniques will also build stretch into these millennium fabrics.

Consumers have become very sensitive to the soft, luxurious feel of fabrics. This was once the domain of natural fibers, but synthetics, alone or blended, will have this softer hand. Familiar fibers will be blended with unusual fibers, creating a wealth of natural/technical fabrics. Metallics, including steel, copper and aluminum will become important as they are fashioned into threads, then woven with nylon, polyester or linen. Innovations will include cotton/metallic denim for jeans.

A few very old fabrics will be popular once again. Hemp, which can't be grown in the U.S. because it's a close cousin of cannabis (marijuana), is becoming a viable textile product. One company is producing a knittable, 100 percent hemp yarn, which can be used to create fabrics that offer three times the UV protection of cotton. Leathers will be washable, breathable, stain-resistant and waterproof.

Broader color ranges, fine-line printing techniques and dyeing processes that are less likely to pollute our air and water are in the future for all fabrics. ■

CANDLES ARE A BURNING ISSUE

Holiday Safety Precautions

Candles give the holiday table a special glow, but some special precautions are in order. Always burn candles on protected, heat-resistant surfaces. Avoid putting them in the way of a draft, as this will cause rapid, uneven burning and excess dripping. Keep them away from anything flammable. When they burn down to within two inches of the holder or the decorations, they should be extinguished. When grouping candles together, place them at least three inches apart so they do not melt one another.

Refrigerate candles before you use them so they will burn more slowly. Be sure to wrap them in foil or plastic so the wicks will not absorb moisture during refrigeration.

Before lighting, clean and trim candle wicks to one-quarter inch. Long or crooked wicks can cause uneven burning or excessive dripping. If a candle has been used previously, clean it with a piece of nylon or soft cloth. Maximum burning time for a candle at one setting, should be no more than one hour for every inch of its diameter. Never leave a burning candle unattended. Do not extinguish candles with water, as it can cause the hot wax to splatter and may cause some candle containers to break.

At holiday time, candle wax drips on tablecloths or placemats are common. To remove them, use a dull knife to scrape off the surface wax. Place clean paper towels underneath and on top of the stain. Press with a warm iron, transferring the wax from the cloth to the towels. Repeat, changing the towels frequently until they no longer absorb the wax. Then, place the stain face down on clean paper towels and sponge with a prewash stain remover or cleaning fluid. Blot with paper towels, then let dry. Launder. If any stain remains, do not dry in a dryer. Rewash using chlorine bleach, if safe for the fabric, or color-safe bleach. The quicker a stain is treated, the better the chance of removing it, however, some waxes contain dyes that may stain fabrics permanently. ■

THE LOW DOWN ON RUB DOWNS

Massagers for Stress Reduction

Weary holiday shoppers, pooped party givers, exhausted revelers or those who simply have too much tension in their lives all year 'round are part of the growing group of consumers who are increasingly attracted to massagers.

Newness and innovation are keeping pace with consumer interest, creating offerings tailored to specific needs and preferences, reports The Soap and Detergent Association. Wraps, handhelds, foot massagers, back massagers, cushions, seat toppers, mats, furniture and more are proliferating in the marketplace. Many of these massagers are no longer in the budget "stocking stuffer" category. They have graduated to a more substantial price range, with an average cost of \$40.

Technological developments have produced innovations that improve the performance of existing products. Foot bath products now bubble, maintain heat and contain built-in tapping actions. Foot massagers offer wet or dry massage, infrared heat and even magnets. Wand massagers have been re-engineered to provide more power and deeper, masseur-like action. The motor has been relocated from the handle to the head so that the massage effect is no longer diffused into the hand. And different models feature different effects, such as percussive action or deep tissue and rolling action.

Relaxation features are popular, too. While additions, such as magnets, aromatherapy and sound therapy, may not have the blessing of the medical establishment, but many consumers are drawn to them anyway. In the magnetic area, at least one manufacturer is incorporating magnets into its best selling seat cushion and mat massager. Other magnetic therapy products include individual body wraps, magnetic insoles and magnetic bracelets. At least one sound therapy massager can be attached to a CD player so that the sound pitches create and vary the massage sensations. ■



MISCELLANY

Bed and Table Linens Take A Holiday

As the millennium approaches, manufacturers are offering table linens that can help set the tone for exciting holiday celebrations. Luxury fibers and seasonal embellishments will ring in the New Year, observes The Soap and Detergent Association.

Silks, damasks and metallics give placemats, napkins and table runners an air of opulence. Softer colorways, including lavender and pink or celadon and mauve, update poinsettia designs and other traditional holiday patterns. Deeper tones, including plum, aqua and teal, lend a Victorian approach to holiday celebrations. For a more natural, handcrafted look, layered assortments include woven tablecloths with coordinating, tightly knit placemats and loopy chenille runners.

Millennium madness is evident in a table linen collection that features the *01-01-00* license. Bed linens, including acrylic throws, fleece pillows and accessories, sport the *Class of 2000* license.

Plop! Fizz! Oh, What A Bath This Is!

Fizzies have hit the bath world, creating a bubbly sensation that adds fragrance and fun to the water.

The spa-in-a-tablet was first introduced as a novel way for bathers to sample a scent while soaking. Consumer demand has turned this novelty into a growing bath product category, reports The Soap and Detergent Association.

Today's bath tablets are the descendants of bath cubes, which contained sodium bicarbonate and sodium borate. Less compressed and with a larger surface area than their predecessors, the new fizzies dissolve faster, adding more bubbles.

Fragrance and fizz combine to transport the bather into a sensuous, stress-free environment. Decorative shapes, such as hearts, butterflies, sea shells, stars and roses give these products visual appeal. Additives, such as fruit acids and essential oils, condition the skin; aromatic ingredients help hydrate the body and liven up the tub.

Preventing Rotavirus in Children

The pediatric world is spreading the word about the existence and prevention of rotavirus, the most common cause of diarrhea in infants and young children. Almost all children are infected sometime before age four. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, watery diarrhea and low-grade fever. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants receive the new vaccine at two, four and six months of age. For more information, The Soap and Detergent Association recommends talking to your pediatrician.

Rotavirus is spread from person to person. Proper hand washing will help prevent the disease from spreading. Wet hands with warm, running water. Add soap and rub together to make a frothy lather. Keep lathering for about ten seconds, cleaning the front and back of hands, between fingers and under fingernails. Rinse hands well under warm water, letting the water run down to the fingertips. Dry hands with a clean, dry towel, and use the towel to turn off the faucet.

Home Office Storage Goes Fashionable

Remember those predictions about computers and e-mail spawning the paperless office? Paper is proliferating, making snazzy office storage containers more popular. And with more than 43 million people in the work-at-home category, manufacturers are enjoying unprecedented sales. Fashionable storage containers are an inexpensive way to jazz up even the drabest of office space.

Plastic continues to be the most popular material in the home office storage market, but other materials, such as mesh, wood, wicker and glass, are in great demand, notes The Soap and Detergent Association. This is because people are looking for storage containers that go beyond the practical to function as attractive room accents and reflections of one's personal style. Even paperboard containers have style, thanks to textures like techno, corduroy and stained hardboard that make them more tactile and colors that make them more interesting. ■

Q & A

SDA Answers Your Questions

Q: While replacing a toner cartridge in my printer, I got some toner on my white blouse. What's the best way to remove this stain?

A: Toner cartridges used in copying machines and printers contain carbon, an insoluble substance which is difficult to remove. However, repeated washing may remove or lighten the stain.

First, shake off any loose particles, then treat the stain with a prewash stain remover or a solution of laundry detergent and water. Wash the blouse, then remove it from the washer and see if the stain is removed. If it isn't, do not dry the blouse, but pretreat and wash again. Drying before the stain is removed may permanently set the stain. Continue this procedure until the stain is removed or lightened.

Q: I have a few small spots on a jacket that is "dry clean" only. Can I use a prewash stain remover on the spots so I don't have to have it dry cleaned?

A: No, you should not use a laundry prewash stain remover on dry cleanable garments. The stain remover needs to be laundered after it is applied and before the garment is worn.

There are stain removal products specifically formulated for treating stains on dry cleanable garments. Check the laundry aisle in the supermarket and try one of those products instead.

Q: I used a prewash stain remover on a pair of washable pants. The stains came out, but now there are a few spots that are a lighter color than the pants. What happened, and how can I remove these new spots?

A: Certain substances, such as perspiration, acidic foods and juices, and some medications and antiseptics, can remove color or change fabric color if the fabric dye is sensitive. The stains you tried to remove were probably from one of these substances. Unfortunately, there is nothing you can do to remove the discoloration. ■

WHAT'S NEW?

A Christmas gift for the cook who has (almost) everything: a Flowering Onion Maker. Creating those decorative and delicious onion flowers that are a specialty at many restaurants is easy with this durable plastic cutter guide and corer. It comes gift-boxed with instructions and recipes for making an appetizer that is a centerpiece all by itself.

(Acme International, Inc.; 1006 Chancellor Ave.; Maplewood, NJ 07040)

Anyone who has had the experience of watering the carpet along with the Christmas tree will appreciate the easy-fill properties of this new tree stand. The E-Z-Fill Christmas Tree Stand features a detachable, clear water jug. Remove the jug, fill it up, and return it to the stand where it dispenses water automatically to the stand reservoir as needed. The see-through jug makes it easy to see when refills are required. The 22-inch round stand holds trees up to 9½-inches tall with 6-inch diameters.

(Lasko Metal Products, Inc.; 820 Lincoln Ave.; Westchester, PA 19380)

Untangling the Christmas lights is a task guaranteed to make even the most cheerful Santa lose the holiday spirit. The Season Storage Collection Christmas Light and Ornament Organizer is the perfect solution. It's designed to keep those strings of lights, garlands and ornaments safely and neatly tucked away from season to season. Up to 800 feet of lights and garlands can be wrapped neatly on one of four wrapper inserts. Forty separate compartments accommodate other ornaments.

(Tamor Corp.; 20 Mohawk Drive; P.O. Box 1186; Leominster, MA 01453) ■





"KEEP IT CLEAN" BRIEFS

For thorough cleaning and rinsing, clothes need to circulate freely in the wash. Load the washer loosely with dry, unfolded clothes. Do not pack clothes tightly in the washer. Make up a load with items of different sizes. Include no more than two to three sheets or similar large items in one load.

New products for freshening and spot cleaning dry-clean-only fabrics are now available. Such products have special cleaners to use for removing small stains. They also lift odors, like smoke and perspiration, and remove wrinkles.

The products work by using a stain remover applied directly to spots. Garments are put into a bag along with a special pre-moistened cloth and tumble dried. Immediately after drying, garments should be hung up so wrinkles will fall out. Such products are not designed to provide thorough, over-all cleaning of a garment.

Use the proper wash cycle to get the best cleaning, to minimize wrinkling and to prevent fabric damage. Use a Regular, Cotton/Sturdy or White cycle for sturdy fabrics, such as cottons, denim, linen and heavily soiled clothes.

Use a Permanent Press, Easy Care, Wrinkle Free Cottons or Colors cycle for permanent press and no-iron fabrics, such as wrinkle-free cottons, polyester and nylon. These fabrics need a cool-down rinse to avoid wrinkling during the spin cycle.

Use a Delicate or Handwashable cycle for sheer fabrics, loosely knit items, washable woolens and anything labeled "hand wash." Such items require gentle agitation to avoid damaging the fabrics.■

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