



# CleaningMatters

Tips and Trends from the American Cleaning Institute<sup>SM</sup>

November/December 2010

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## Calendar of Clean

### November is ...

- **Daylight Savings Time ends: Nov. 7**
- **Veterans Day: Nov. 11**
- **Thanksgiving: Nov. 25** – see *Holiday Hygiene* and *Clean Ideas*

### December is ...

- **C.L.E.A.N.® Awards deadline: Dec. 1**
- **National Handwashing Awareness Week: Dec. 5-11-** see *Holiday Hygiene and Clean Homes... Safe Healthy Families Award*
- **New Year's Eve: Dec. 31-** see *Holiday Hygiene and Clean Ideas*



### Keep Germs Away During the Holiday Season!

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water, scrubbing for 20 seconds.
- When you are on the go and soap and water are not available, use wipes or hand sanitizers available in gel or foam.

We want families to enjoy the holiday season, so it's a good time to remind your children about the importance of keeping hands clean at home and on the go. Children can do their part in helping to keep Santa healthy by cleaning their hands before they jump on his lap to talk about their wish list this year!

While you are talking to your children about good hand hygiene, encourage them to decorate our **Clean your Paws for Santa Claus** coloring sheet and display it on your refrigerator during the holidays to remind your family about the importance of good hand hygiene! Color, scan and send your finished coloring sheet to [nbock@cleaninginstitute.org](mailto:nbock@cleaninginstitute.org) so that we can add your artwork to our gallery on our website!

### Good Hand Hygiene is Critical



Clean Hands Save Lives



For more information about hand hygiene, visit [www.cleaninginstitute.org](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org). This resource is intended for educational purposes only. No reproduction or resale is permitted without permission but with credit given to the American Cleaning Institute®.

## Clean Your Paws for Santa Claus!

Keep Germs Away During the Holiday Season!

Download and share our holiday coloring sheet with your children as you talk to them about good hand hygiene. Color, scan and send your finished coloring sheet to [nbock@cleaninginstitute.org](mailto:nbock@cleaninginstitute.org) so that we can add your artwork to the gallery on our website!

Link for PDF is <http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/assets/1/AssetManager/SantaPaws2010.pdf>

## Holiday Hygiene

*Ways to Stay Healthy During the Holiday*

With so many other good things to do during the holiday season, who wants to spend precious time being sick? Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®, shares some of her favorite tips for staying healthy during the holidays.



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[www.americancleaninginstitute.org](http://www.americancleaninginstitute.org)  
[info@americancleaninginstitute.org](mailto:info@americancleaninginstitute.org)

## Holiday Hygiene (cont.)

### *Ways to Stay Healthy During the Holiday*

**Get the clean hands habit.** Frequent handwashing is the number-one way to prevent the spread of germs that cause colds and flu. In the latest observational study sponsored by the American Society for Microbiology and the American Cleaning Institute, 85% of adults washed their hands in public restrooms, compared with 77% in 2007. The 85% total was actually the highest observed since these studies began in 1996. It shows that we're getting better, but there's still a long way to go. To learn more, visit [http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean\\_living/2010\\_aci\\_asm\\_handwashing\\_study.aspx](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org/clean_living/2010_aci_asm_handwashing_study.aspx)

**Be handshake savvy.** The holiday meet-and-greets offer lots of opportunities for hugs and handshakes. The downside of all this seasonal camaraderie is the opportunity to transmit germs from one person to another. Be very aware of keeping your hands away from your eyes, nose or mouth.

**Control your social calendar.** Answering every invitation that comes your way may leave you overscheduled, overtired and vulnerable to the germs that cause colds and flu. Be judicious in your acceptances so that you have time to do the things you really enjoy.

**Get plenty of rest.** According to the National Sleep Foundation, adults need seven to nine hours of sleep per night to stay healthy. If you find yourself running around like one of Santa's overworked elves, even 15-20 minutes of shut-eye will recharge your batteries. But don't overdo it. Sleeping more than 30 minutes can lead to sleep inertia, which makes you feel sluggish and more tired than ever.

**Reduce the possibility of food-borne illness.** If you're the host, keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. If you're the guest and you think that buffet food may have been sitting out too long, give the food a pass.

**Join the weight control patrol.** Here are a few helpful strategies:

- Eat a small, healthy meal before party time. It will be easier to resist the high calorie foods.
- At a party, don't stand next to the buffet table. It leads to the temptation to overeat. Instead, mingle with the guests.
- Carry an apple or a bag of baby carrots with you, particularly when shopping, so you always have a healthy snack available. Tuck some hand wipes or a hand sanitizer in with your snack so it's easy to have clean hands no matter where you eat.
- Drink plenty of water.

**Don't give exercise a holiday.** If there's no time to follow your usual routine, be creative. While watching sports on television, ride an exercise bike, treadmill or do some other type of exercise. If you don't have any exercise equipment, you can do crunches, pushups or jog in place during the commercials. When shopping, park your car a little farther from the door than usual so you can add a bit of walking to your routine. Forego the elevator or the escalator for the stairs.



## Clean Homes...Safe and Healthy Families Award

The annual Clean Homes...Safe and Healthy Families Award honors members of the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) for innovative educational programs that utilize any American Cleaning Institute® educational materials (including those concerned with home safety and disaster preparedness) to help families and individuals understand the link between clean and safe homes and good health.

The 2010 recipients were honored at the NEAFCS Annual Session in Portland, Maine, September 20-24, 2010, where they each received a \$500 cash award.

### **Kansas Hand Hygiene Project**

Robin Eubank, Barber County, Kansas Family and Consumer Science Extension Agent teamed up with Heather Henke, NEAFCS Member and director of the Barber County Community Health Department, to use a multi-faceted approach to reducing illness by increasing awareness of hand hygiene in the schools and community. They developed a program to teach hand hygiene to grade school students, to reinforce knowledge with junior high and high school students, and to teach parents and other members of the public the health benefits of proper hand hygiene. They used a range of materials, including ACI's "Hooray for Handwashing" booklet and take-home handouts for students, as well as creating posters for restrooms and classrooms.

At an outdoor reading session for the younger students, hand sanitizer was provided for students to use as lunch was eaten outside under the trees. Another session utilized Glo Germ so that students could see the success—or lack thereof—of their handwashing techniques. In their application, the team cited one of their success reports that came from a school secretary who reported, "Flu related absences dropped off after the September round of hand hygiene lessons. Many factors could have contributed to this decline; however, the timing suggests that improved hand hygiene could have been a key factor."

### **Michigan Senior Center Apartment Upgrade Project**

Joan Vinette, Extension Educator, Michigan State University Extension-Alger County, teamed up with Elizabeth Raiala, from the Munising Senior Citizens Club and Christine Rosenberg from Experience Works, a national non-profit organization that offers training, employment and community service opportunities for mature workers. The project involved the renovation of a rental apartment above the Munising Senior Citizens club. The rent on this unit provides primary support for the organization's programs. Leaky pipes, inadequate electric service causing outages, moldy bathroom ceilings and walls, carpet odor, chipped paint and peeling wallpaper were some of the obstacles that needed to be overcome to create a profit revenue stream. A community partnership was established to get the task done. MSU Extension curriculum materials and ACI cleaning resources, including ACI's "Hard Surface Hygiene" Fact Sheet, were shared. The team found it especially convenient to be able to go to ACI's website, [www.cleaninginstitute.org](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org), to get answers to questions as they occurred during the whole renovation project.

Check out [www.neafcs.org/](http://www.neafcs.org/) for application information for the 2011 award. The activity or program must have been conducted by an Extension Agent in the past two years. Applications may be submitted by an individual or team.



## Deck the Halls without the Grime

*Tips and tricks to clean and restore your holiday decorations after a year in storage*

Taking down the holiday decorations is a task we all seem to want to complete as quickly as possible. The upside is that it gets done now. The downside is that, once that the holidays roll around again, we're faced with unpacking dirty, dusty decorations.

Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®, has some tips for refreshing those decorations that have been hibernating for many months.

### Artificial trees, wreaths and garlands

At a minimum, these items will need some “fluffing” after long months of storage. But they may also be repositories for an accumulation of dust and dirt, which leaves them looking dull and dingy. Many people use artificial trees to avoid the allergens of a real tree. It's a healthy idea but, if you fail to keep these decorations clean, you're simply exchanging one allergy/asthma trigger (mold spores) for another (dust).

#### To clean an artificial tree:

- Wrap a large sheet around the base, spreading it out so it extends under the branches.
- Always follow the tree manufacturer's instructions. If safe, gently vacuum the branches. Depending on how much suction your tree can handle, use a regular vacuum with the fabric upholstery/bristle brush attachment or a small hand-held vacuum. Hold the vacuum an inch or so away from the branches, being careful not to suck any of the “needles” into the vacuum.
- Another option is to take the tree to a sheltered outdoor area and brush it gently with a whisk broom so the dust disperses into the air.
- As you clean, start from the top of the tree and work your way down to the lower branches.
- If the tree still looks dingy, you may be able to damp-wipe it down. Fill a bucket with warm water and a squirt of liquid hand dishwashing detergent. Dip a dishtowel or an old T-shirt into the water and wring it out very well. Then very gently wipe down the tree branches, removing any dirt that vacuuming left behind.

Be aware that many artificial trees aren't designed to withstand much cleaning. You may have to decide between a dust-and-dirt free tree and one that lasts for several more years.

#### To clean artificial garlands:

The best way to clean a dusty garland is to take it outside and shake it vigorously. If necessary, shake it in sections. If it is very dusty and you are sensitive to allergens, you may want to consider wearing a dust mask.

#### To clean artificial wreaths:

Artificial wreaths are generally more fragile than trees or garlands. Use a soft feather duster, canned air or a hairdryer set on “cool” to gently remove any dust.

#### Glass Ornaments

If your glass ornaments have any type of surface decoration, it is generally applied on the exterior and is often done with water-soluble paint. Because of this, you should avoid using water, spray cleaner, soap, detergent or any other chemical solution to clean them. A soft feather duster is the best cleaning choice.

#### Make a Storage Plan

So you don't find yourself in the same boat next year, develop a storage system. As you take your decorations down, clean them and store them in closed bins, boxes or plastic bags that are clearly marked. While specialized storage containers may seem like an extravagance, they are designed to keep treasured decorations safe from dust, mold and breakage.

If possible, group the decorations in categories like “dining room,” “mantel,” “front door,” etc. That way, you can avoid the decorating frenzy by tackling your home one area at a time. If you particularly like the way you've decorated the door, the mantel, the staircase, etc., this year, take a picture and pack the photo away with the appropriate decorations.



## ACI Gets Social

### *Accurate Information at Your Fingertips*

The American Cleaning Institute® is embracing social media to bring you the latest information about cleaning products, tips, issues and ideas.

**Facebook:** Friend us on Facebook to get the latest news when cleaning your homes, hands, clothes, dishes and surfaces. Here is the place to catch up with ACI as we talk to partners and friends about the many ways the cleaning products industry contributes positively to society. We also invite you to discuss cleaning solutions and post pictures of your before-and-after dirty dilemmas. Go to [www.facebook.com/AmericanCleaningInstitute](http://www.facebook.com/AmericanCleaningInstitute) to join.

**Twitter:** Get short, timely messages from the American Cleaning Institute via Twitter, a rich source of instantly updated information. It's easy to stay updated on an incredibly wide variety of topics. To follow us, go to <http://twitter.com/CleanInstitute>. You don't have to have a Twitter account to view our tweets.

**LinkedIn:** Network with fellow professionals in the cleaning products industry through ACI's LinkedIn group. To join, go to [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) and search under "groups" for American Cleaning Institute.

**ACI News Feed:** Want to get the latest press releases from ACI? Or know when the newest issue of Cleaning Matters is available? Subscribe to the ACI News Feed and the latest information from ACI will be automatically downloaded to your computer. Go to [www.cleaninginstitute.org](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org). On the home page, scroll down to the bar near the bottom of the page. Click on the orange icon on the right and follow the directions to subscribe.

**Quick Links to any of these groups:** go to [www.cleaninginstitute.org](http://www.cleaninginstitute.org). On the home page, scroll down to the bar near the bottom of the page, just below the What's New section. Click on the appropriate icon on the right (there are four: News Feed, LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook) for a quick link to any of these groups. Follow the directions to join if you don't already have an account.

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## Fireplace Cleanup

### *Solutions for Removing Soot and Stains*

In the midst of a cold, damp winter, nothing says "cozy" better than a cheerful fire in the fireplace. But along with the lovely ambiance of a wood-burning fireplace comes two less desirable companions: soot and ash. Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®, has some solutions for banishing them from your hearth.

#### **Soot Stains on the Carpet**

When soot gets on the carpet, our first instinct is to brush it away. But doing that will simply imbed the stain deeper into the fibers. Instead, vacuum the spot, using a canister vacuum and a crevice tool. Avoid the upright type of vacuum with a rotating brush as the brush will spread the stain. Gently work from the outer edge of the stain to the center. If this doesn't remove most of the stain, stop the do-it-yourself process and call a carpet cleaning professional.

However, if vacuuming removes most of the stain, the next step (assuming it is safe according to the carpet

manufacturer) is to apply rubbing alcohol to a clean white cloth and blot gently until the spot is removed. Do not saturate the carpet as the alcohol can harm the backing if it has a latex bond. If the spot still remains, mix ¼ teaspoon of liquid dishwashing detergent with one quart of water. Blot gently with a clean white paper towel. Continue until the spot is removed. To rinse, mist, using tap water and a spray bottle; blot to remove the moisture. Spray lightly; apply a pad (about ½" thick) of paper towels weighted down with a brick. Let the carpet thoroughly dry.

#### **A Screen That's Clean**

Glass fireplace screens are a magnet for baked-on ash buildup. Before cleanup begins, line the floor with newspapers to catch the debris.

If the ash build-up is heavy, the first step is to scrape most of it off. To avoid scratching the glass, use a flat razor blade. Hold it so it's almost flat against the screen. Start at one corner and work your way across and then down the screen.

To remove softer ash build-up – or the residue that's left after scraping – use a spray glass cleaner to remove any greasy build-up. Apply with a soft cloth or spray; wipe clean with cloth or paper towels.



## Changes in Automatic Dishwasher Detergents

### *An Update on Reduced Phosphate Products*

Consumers may have noticed a change in their dishwasher detergents. Recently, members of the American Cleaning Institute®, a trade group whose membership includes manufacturers for a vast majority of the nation's detergent market, voluntarily agreed to reduce the amount of phosphorous in dishwasher detergents.

The voluntary action is the result of a team effort by the detergent industry and lawmakers across the country. This supplements the legislative ban on phosphorous in at least seventeen U.S. states (including Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin) and similar restrictions in Canada.

Although phosphate was removed from the major brands of laundry detergent by 1993, it took longer for manufacturers to develop dishwasher detergent products with only trace amounts of phosphate. Because of the different role phosphorous plays in cleaning in the low water, no suds dishwasher conditions, removing phosphate from dishwasher detergent presented manufacturers with a difficult challenge in reformulation. After 20 years of innovations, new products are now available.

#### **What did phosphate do?**

When used in automatic dishwashing detergents, phosphate helped to remove food and grease, reduce spotting and filming, control water hardness and suspend the bits of food so they were not redistributed on your dishes.

#### **What impact does phosphate have on the environment?**

Phosphate supports the growth of plants, including algae. When too much phosphate is present, excessive amounts of algae can develop. This may lead to undesirable water quality impacts, including reductions in aquatic life, and poor taste and odors in drinking water.

#### **So, is reduced phosphate dishwashing detergent better for the environment?**

Scientific studies demonstrate that a noticeable improvement in water quality would be affected only through decreases across all phosphorus-contributing sources, including fertilizer (residential and agricultural), construction run-off and poorly-treated municipal sewage. Although phosphate from automatic dishwashing represents a minimal contribution in the environment, members of ACI are doing their part.

If consumers have questions about their dishwasher detergents, ACI recommends that they contact the manufacturer. Most product labels contain a phone number or website for consumer questions.

## Clean S.P.O.T. – National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences *Connecting the Dots with Extension Professionals*

For the past 41 years, the American Cleaning Institute® (formerly The Soap and Detergent Association) has been a part of the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) annual meeting. This year was not an exception. ACI welcomed hundreds of Extension Professionals into our booth to provide them with educational materials to support work in their communities and find out more about their program needs.



Each year, ACI partners with NEAFCS to honor Extension Professionals for their educational programs that help families and individuals understand the link between clean and safe homes and good health with the Clean Homes... Safe and Healthy Families Program award. This award provides ACI with an opportunity to acknowledge excellent programs that are impacting consumers on a local level.

Many people don't know about the valuable information that Extension provides. Or, that the Cooperative Extension serves almost every county in the nation, from the largest to the smallest. "If you don't know, then, you should", says Nancy Bock, Vice President of Consumer Education. "They are a nationwide educational organization provided by the U.S. Government through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the state governments through land-grant universities and county governments. Extension provides practical, non-biased information that is important to the quality of life for individuals and families."

To learn more about Cooperative Extension and NEAFCS go to [www.neafcs.org](http://www.neafcs.org).



## Ask Nancy

## Tell Nancy



Remember when you were in school and Show 'n Tell was a favorite classroom activity? Well, that's just what we'd like to do with this section of Cleaning Matters. We'd love to hear more from our readers! Here's an acceptable place to air your dirty laundry . . . to tell others how you coaxed spots and stains from your favorite outfits. Do you have a funny story about what was left in the pockets? What lessons have your kids learned the hard way about doing their own laundry? You decide what's next! Send Nancy an email at [education@cleaninginstitute.org](mailto:education@cleaninginstitute.org) and write "Tell Nancy a story" in the subject line.

**Q: Can you use steam mops to clean sealed engineered hardwood floors?**

**A:** As a general rule, the hardwood flooring industry does not recommend using steam mops on wood floors of any type. The manufacturers have recommended cleaning practices and solutions, and using other products and machines will void your warranty. Contact the manufacturer of your flooring to get their cleaning recommendations.

**Q: I have a blouse made of 95% cotton that I need to launder. However, the manufacturer's care label says professional dry clean only.****Why can't I hand wash or put it in the washing machine?**

**A:** There are many reasons why your garment might have a "professional dry clean only" care label. Washing might harm the buttons or the trim. Or the dyes might run if the garment is washed. In addition, some fabrics, such as cotton, shrink when washed—unless they have been preshrunk in the manufacturing process. Even if the fabric in your blouse was preshrunk, the garment manufacturer may fear that some residual shrinkage could occur. Most manufacturers choose care labels that cover the "worst case" scenario. So, if you decide to wash the garment, choose hand washing in cool water—and know that you do so at your own risk.

*Nancy Bock is Vice President of Consumer Education at the American Cleaning Institute®*



## Clean Ideas ..... Countdown to the Holidays

### *A Checklist to Get Your Home Ready for the Holidays*

Work through the list a few items a day. Before you know it, your home will be clean and ready for the holidays!

1. Put mats and throw rugs at all entryways. This will help prevent dirt from being tracked into your home.
2. Keep a boot tray near the door for rain or snow soaked footwear.
3. Vacuum carpets, floors and baseboards so you won't have to count dust bunnies among your holiday guests!
4. Sort and discard old magazines and newspapers. Save a few interesting ones and leave them on a table in the guest room for your company's nighttime reading.
5. Aim high! Add a telescoping dust wand to your cleaning supplies so it's easy to banish cobwebs in corners and around ceiling fixtures.
6. Before the holiday rush takes over, give all the bed linens a thorough cleaning.
7. Develop a sorting system for handling the mail so it doesn't accumulate in piles.
8. Analyze your scarf, hat and glove storage and develop some jumble-free solutions.
9. If your pets prefer the furniture to the floor, cover their favorite upholstered pieces with attractive, washable throws that can be whisked out of sight when guests arrive.
10. Keep a complete set of your most-used cleaning supplies on each floor of the house. They'll always be within easy reach for touch-up cleaning.
11. Put a container of pop-up disposable wipes next to every bathroom and powder room sink. Encourage family members to use them every time they turn the tap water off.
12. Stock up on electrostatic dust cloths for on-the-spot cleaning of your flat screen TV and other dust magnets.
13. If you plan on doing a lot of holiday cooking and entertaining, check your stockpile of aprons, potholders, dish clothes and dish towels. Make sure they're clean and in usable condition.
14. Invest in a few small, hand-held vacuums designed for your TV, computer keyboard or gaming station (cordless or with a charger) and install them in strategic places around your home. They are perfect for removing dust and crumbs from your electronics.
15. Flushable bathroom wipes are good for touching up surfaces between deeper cleanings.
16. Stock up on disposable hand towels for the powder room and guest bath.
17. Make room for guest's gear by purging the coat closet of out-of-season items and stocking it with hangers sturdy enough for winter coats.
18. To avoid beverage rings on your wood or glass top furniture, keep coasters out in plain sight.
19. Clean out the refrigerator to make room for holiday goodies. Remove the contents, checking expiration dates, and discarding anything whose time is up. Clean the shelves and wipe down bottles and jars before returning items to the refrigerator.
20. For soiled table linens, get into the soaking habit. Once the meal is over, clear the table and pretreat any stains with a prewash stain remover. Fill the washing machine with laundry detergent, warm water and bleach that's safe for the fabric, toss the linens in, and let them soak overnight. Same goes for your fine napkins and placemats.
21. Place tissues and hand sanitizer near doors for a quick pit-stop.
22. If the counter tops gleam, the kitchen immediately looks cleaner. Find the best spray cleaner for your particular countertop and use it regularly.
23. To cut down on clutter and crumbs, confine snacks to certain areas of the house.
24. Inventory your laundry supplies so you don't run out of anything at this busy time of the year.
25. Give yourself a holiday present: a professional cleaning service pre- or post-holiday is just what Santa ordered!

