

Calendar of Clean

March is...

- Poison Prevention Awareness Month
- National Poison Prevention Week (March 20-26)

Attention Family and Consumer Science Extension Educators!

Plan now to apply for the SDA *Clean Homes ... Healthy Families* Program Award of Excellence. For more information and a copy of the award application, go to www.neafcs.org.

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Wild About Wipes!

Consumers weigh in on this handy cleaning tool

Cleaning countertops, disinfecting surfaces, and personal hygiene are among consumers' favorite uses for wipe products, according to The Soap and Detergent Association's National Cleaning Survey.

When asked if they've ever used any type of cleaning disinfectant or antibacterial wipe, 66 percent of consumers surveyed said, "yes." Among those consumers who've used wipes, 80 percent say they use a wipe at least once a week. More than one-third (36%) use a wipe at home at least once a day.

What Is It About Wipes?

An equal amount – 26 percent – like the portability of wipes and how easily you can dispose of dirt or germs. People with on-the-go lifestyles benefit from the "take anywhere" characteristics of wipes, according to SDA. And, they love the built-in elbow grease that gets the job done!

Where the Wipes Are

Among those who use wipes, SDA asked what was their favorite use for wipes in the home. Here are the top choices:

- **23% each** - cleaning countertops/appliances and disinfecting/sanitizing surfaces

Rounding out the top five:

- **17%** - cleaning hands/face/skin

- 11% - cleaning bathroom fixtures
- 6% - dusting/cleaning furniture

Safe Cleaning

When it comes to safe and effective use of cleaning wipes, SDA reminds consumers to read all product label directions carefully. Take a moment to check the label. It's an easy way to make sure you're using the product safely, properly, and effectively.

You can find out more information about the survey at: www.cleaning101.com/whatsnew/01-17-05.html.

News Flash

Asthma Myths Unmasked

Get the facts about this growing threat

Did you know by the year 2020, an estimated **29 million Americans** will have asthma? This chronic condition is our nation's most common and costly disease. In honor of World Asthma Day (May 3), The Soap and Detergent Association would like to help dispel some common myths about asthma.

Myth vs. Fact

Myth: Having asthma means your home is dirty.

Fact: Having asthma doesn't mean your home is dirty, but it *could* mean that you might react to asthma "triggers" in your home. Even the cleanest-looking home can harbor dust mites, animal dander, mold and mildew, cockroaches and their droppings, and pollen that filters in from outdoors – all common asthma triggers.

One particularly big offender to asthma sufferers are dust mites, microscopic creatures that feed on human skin flakes. Preventative measures include: vacuuming at least once a week, regular dusting, and weekly washing of bed linens. Special covers that protect pillows and mattresses from dust mite re-infestation are another solution. For more about cleaning to control asthma, visit: www.cleaning101.com/health/allergies/Welcome.html.

Myth: Asthma is uncomfortable, but not serious.

Fact: Asthma is serious, and it can be life-threatening. Young children are at the greatest risk. Asthma is the most common chronic childhood disease in the U.S., affecting more than one child in 20. It accounts for one in six of all pediatric emergency visits in the U.S. and causes nearly 90,000 hospitalizations each year.

Myth: Asthma cannot be controlled.

Fact: With commitment and a little extra time, it's possible to control asthma. The key is identifying and eliminating the triggers. Some people's asthma is triggered by a specific allergen; for others, it's a combination of allergens. By working with your doctor and keeping an asthma diary to track asthma episodes, you can pinpoint what sparks an attack and develop a plan to manage asthma.

Myth: Asthma always begins in childhood.

Fact: Asthma has no respect for age. Some people outgrow asthma after childhood, some first develop it in adulthood, and others must cope with it all their lives.

For more information about asthma, visit The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's Web site at: www.nhlbi.nih.gov.

Spring Cleaning Spotlight

Put the sparkle back in windows and walls

Clean windows and walls are the icing on the spring-cleaning cake. They make everything else you've done look even better. The Soap and Detergent Association offers up some new ways to clean windows and walls.

Window Dressing

- **Curtain call.** The deteriorating effect of dust and sunlight can make curtains fragile. If the care label says they're washable, launder on the delicate cycle. Otherwise, have them professionally dry-cleaned. But, with elaborate treatments that are difficult to dismantle on a regular basis, a good vacuuming may make more sense. Follow up with a fabric refresher spray to remove lingering odors.
- **Blind ambition.** Blinds are great dust traps. An easy cleaning tool is an electrostatic duster with a soft, disposable head - the modern version of the feather duster! The multitude of soft, fluffy fibers pass easily between the slats, grabbing dust and dirt.

Windows of Opportunity

- **Remove dirt and debris.** Vacuum window frames and sills to get rid of dust, soot, cobwebs, and dead insects.
- **Spray clean.** Traditional glass cleaners have a crisp, ammonia scent. New varieties offer a range of fragrances, including lavender, berry, orange, and lemon.
- **Head outdoors.** Check out new outdoor window cleaners. These spray products come with a nozzle that attaches to your garden hose. Spray outside windows from at least five feet away. The sheeting action helps get the windows clean. And, windows don't need to be towel dried.

Wall Story

- **Read the product label.** It will tell you how to properly use the product and what type of wall surfaces the product *can* and *cannot* be used on.
- **Spray it on.** Use a multi-purpose spray cleaner. For streak-free results, spray onto a cleaning cloth rather than directly on the wall.
- **Rub away.** Crayon marks on the wall, scuff marks on your baseboards, sticky finger marks on the window sill – lift them off the surface with a new, soft cleaning pad that acts just like an eraser.

Keeping Your Home Safe and Clean

Strategies for poison prevention

Cleaning products are used safely by millions of consumers on a daily basis. At the same time, proper product use, supervision, and storage are essential in keeping your home safe and clean. National Poison Prevention Week is March 20-26, which makes it a good time to be reminded about safe use and smart storage of cleaning products, says The Soap and Detergent Association.

Safe Use

- **Schedule routine cleaning around the kids' routines,** such as nap time or when they're not around.
- **Don't be distracted when you are cleaning.** Children act fast and can get hold of a product and swallow it in a surprisingly short time.
- **Never leave cleaning buckets containing liquid unattended.** Besides the obvious dangers of spilling, slipping, and sipping, there's the fact that toddlers are "top heavy." If they topple into a bucket, they could drown, even in a very small amount of liquid.
- **Never leave children unattended around cleaning products.** If you need to answer the doorbell or the phone, take the child with you.
- **Call 1-800-222-1222 for poison-related emergencies.** It's the Poison Control Center's nationwide, toll-free hotline.

Smart Storage

- **Close cleaning product caps securely.** Products with more potential hazard, such as some oven or drain cleaners, come with child-resistant packaging. But, they don't come with someone to close the cap properly. It's up to adults to provide a safe environment!
- **Lock products up.** Store them in a location that's away from children, pets, or food. Install child-proof locks on cabinets and doors.
- **Keep cleaning products in their original containers.** If a child accidentally ingests or spills something on himself, the label provides information concerning the product's contents and advice on what immediate first-aid to perform.
- **Carefully dispose of empty cleaning containers.** To protect children, pets, and garbage handlers, replace caps first, then discard in a sealed recycling bin or garbage container.

For more information, check out SDA's updated guide to safe and effective use of cleaning products at: www.cleaning101.com/health. Also, visit: www.poisonprevention.org.

Highlights

March is ... National Poison Prevention Month

Clean and Safe in the 21st Century is SDA's latest booklet on how to use household cleaning products safely and effectively. It includes up-to-date tips on handwashing, reading and following product use labels, and the safe use and storage of household cleaning products. Check it out at: www.cleaning101.com/health.

Spring Cleaning with the ... Partnership for Food Safety Education

The Partnership for Food Safety Education's Web site offers a wealth of information on preventing foodborne illness through these 4 Simple Steps: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill. For useful ideas for cleaning up your kitchen this season, check out the press release: *Spring Clean Your Way to a Safer Kitchen* at: www.fightbac.org/spring_press.cfm.

The Partnership for Food Safety Education is a coalition of industry, government, and consumer groups dedicated to educating the public about safe food handling practices that help reduce foodborne illness. For more information on cleaning to prevent foodborne bacteria, visit: www.fightbac.org.

Bye, Bye Germs!

Cleaning help for new parents

Germs are definitely not welcome in the nursery! Because babies don't have fully-developed immune systems, they are vulnerable to illness. First-time parents may be especially anxious about the best ways to keep germs and bacteria away. Now, The Soap and Detergent Association is helping you gear up for Mother's Day (May 8) and Father's Day (June 19) with these easy cleaning tips for new parents!

- **Wash your hands.** This is one of the most effective ways to avoid spreading germs. It's especially important after changing a diaper, after using the bathroom, and *before* and *after* preparing an infant's food.
- **Use a disinfectant.** It's a fast, effective way to clean up after baby while combating germs on surfaces like the high chair, diaper changing table, and diaper pail. Be sure to follow directions on the product label.
- **Take wipes along.** Disinfectant wipes are a boon to parents-on-the-go. They're easy for spot cleaning strollers and car seats. But, please remember that these wipes are for disinfecting hard surfaces. They're not to be used on baby-soft skin.

As always, keep household cleaning products out of the reach of children. Close cleaning product containers securely and lock products up.

Cleaning Questions? Ask Nancy!

Q: I'm gearing up for St. Patrick's Day, but I'm worried about stains. What's the best way to treat green stains?

A: Here are ways to treat some common green stains:

Green face makeup: If makeup is oil- or wax-based, remove excess with the back of a spoon. Sponge the remaining stain with a prewash stain remover. Wash in hottest water that's safe for the fabric. Some makeup might contain non-removable dyes. Use washable, removable makeup whenever possible.

Green beer: Soak or sponge stain in cool water. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover or liquid laundry detergent. Launder using oxygen bleach or chlorine bleach, if safe for the fabric.

Green food coloring: Sponge stain promptly with cool water. If this doesn't remove stain, soak stain in cool water for at least 30 minutes. After soaking, pretreat with a prewash stain remover or liquid laundry detergent, then launder.

Green crayons: Use a dull knife to scrape off the surface wax. Place the stain between paper towels and press with a warm iron. Replace paper towels frequently until no more wax is absorbed. Place stain facedown on clean paper towels. Sponge the remaining stain with a prewash stain remover or cleaning fluid. Blot with paper towels; let dry. Then launder.

For the best cleaning performance for your green wardrobe, read and follow both the product label directions for your favorite detergent and the garment care labels.

Q: How can I refresh my table linens for spring after they've been in storage?

A: Try these tips for refreshing table linens for spring celebrations, such as Easter and Passover:

- Always check care labels and product labels before laundering.
- To get rid of wrinkles without ironing, you can use detergents with wrinkle-releasing agents.
- For refreshing more delicate or elaborate items, you can use an in-dryer kit. You use the product in your own clothes dryer to help get rid of wrinkles, clean away odors, and help remove light stains.

– Nancy Bock is Vice President of Education for The Soap and Detergent Association



Dishwashing Tidbits

Get in-the-know about dishwashing

Did You Know?

1. **Smooth hands begin at the sink.** Some hand dishwashing liquids contain ingredients that take care of your hands. Such ingredients include: vitamin E, vitamin B5, proteins, and aloe vera.
2. **There are wipes for hand dishwashing!** The wipes contain dishwashing liquid that lathers up once water is added. One wipe usually lasts a full load of dishes. Do not use these wipes in the dishwasher.
3. **Hand dishwashing liquids come in glorious new scents** – apple, orange, lavender – just to name a few!
4. **New forms of dishwasher products are at your fingertips.** Tablets and gels can be convenient, easy to use, and effective!
5. **You can finally zap red sauce stains and onion and garlic odors from plasticware.** Just use a plastic cleaning booster in your dishwasher, along with your regular dishwasher detergent.
6. **Using your dishwasher can be cost effective!** On average, you can wash a load of dishes in your dishwasher for less than the cost of a postage stamp.