

Cleaning Matters®

Tips and Trends from The Soap and Detergent Association

September/October 2008

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Calendar of Clean

September is ...

- Labor Day: Sep. 1
(See *Stars and Stripes* article)
- Clean Hands Week: Sep. 21-27
(See *Getting Ready and Healthy for Winter*, *Clean Homes* and *Ask Nancy!* articles)
- First Day of Autumn: Sep. 22
(See *Fall Cleaning* article)

October is ...

- Adopt-a-Shelter-Dog Month
(See *Fido Needs a Family* article)
- National Carry a Tune Week : Oct. 5-11
(See *Ask Nancy!* article)
- Global Handwashing Day: Oct. 15
(See *Clean Hands Across the Globe* article)
- Halloween: Oct. 31
(See *Ask Nancy!* article)

Getting Ready and Healthy for Winter

Simple strategies for winter wellness

Get plenty of rest. Eat a balanced diet. Exercise regularly.

This mantra for physical well-being is only part of the story. While it may make you look like the picture of health, it takes more than that to develop a good defense against winter illnesses. Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, offers some effective and easy-to-implement strategies for getting ready and healthy for winter.

Develop a handwashing routine. Washing your hands is the single most important – and the easiest – way to avoid spreading germs that are responsible for colds, flu and staph infections. Some critical times to clean your hands are: before and after meals and snacks; before caring for young children; after touching a public surface; before and after preparing food, especially raw meat, poultry or seafood; after using the restroom; when hands are dirty; after touching animals; after coughing or sneezing; when you or someone around you is ill.

Learn how to wash your hands properly. Who doesn't know how to wash their hands? You'd be surprised! A quick rub with the soap and a splash under the water isn't going to kill those germs. Here's how to do it properly:

more



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Getting Ready and Healthy for Winter (cont.)

1. Wet hands with warm, running water. Then apply soap.
2. Rub hands together vigorously to make a lather, and then scrub all surfaces. Continue for 20 seconds, which is about how long it takes to sing two verses of “Happy Birthday.”
3. Rinse well under warm, running water.
4. Dry hands thoroughly, using paper towels or an air dryer. If possible, use a paper towel to turn off the faucet.

Stock up on handwashing supplies. In addition to traditional hand soap and water (which is the method of choice when removing dirt as well as germs), hand sanitizers and wipes are perfect for times when water is not available. Put them where you need them: in your desk, in your purse, next to the office’s communal coffee pot, at the workbench, in an older child’s lunchbox or backpack, or next to the changing table.

Avoid cross-contamination of food. The attack of “stomach flu” is most likely due to a foodborne gastrointestinal illness. Frequent and thorough handwashing and drying, especially during food preparation, is the best way to minimize the likelihood of contracting or transmitting these types of viral illnesses. But in addition to that, be careful with your food preparation utensils and surfaces. Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs away from other foods in the shopping cart, grocery bags, refrigerator, and on preparation surfaces.

Avoid contact with known allergens. Allergies affecting the nose or throat may increase the chances of getting a cold or flu. Be vigilant about cleaning routinely to help rid your home of dust, pet hair and other triggers.

Quit smoking; avoid secondhand smoke. Because smoking interferes with the mechanisms that keep bacteria and debris out of the lungs, those who use tobacco or who are exposed to secondhand smoke are more prone to respiratory illnesses and more-severe complications than nonsmokers.

News Flash

With SNAP, Hand Hygiene Gets a Good Rap *Somerset, New Jersey, students sing the praises of handwashing*

Students at the Sampson G. Smith Intermediate School in Somerset, New Jersey, rapped their way to the top in the 2008 “Healthy Schools, Healthy People: It’s a SNAP” National Recognition Program.

Ms. Kaz Wright’s fifth-grade class created an original rap song and video to promote personal hygiene through handwashing. With lyrics composed by students Kyle Sims and Samuel Abbey and a dance routine choreographed and performed by the whole class, the video tells the world that “If you wash your hands, it’s good for you. If you don’t, you’ll get the flu.”

The **video** was part of a school-wide project that included a clean-hands logo, morning announcements, front-lobby displays, and recruitment of students to help with their project of having more than 1,200 students and faculty and staff clean their hands before eating lunch. Everyone that participated in the event received a sticker with the event logo on it, “Don’t be fooled by germs.” An announcement was made in the morning that the school would be conducting a handwashing program from 10:00 to 12:20, in which a table would be set up in the main lobby so students could sanitize their hands before eating lunch. Students who sanitized their hands received a sticker. Students explained the benefits of washing hands to school staff, visitors and a reporter from the local newspaper.

The Sampson G. Smith School, represented by students Kyle Sims and Samuel Abbey, along with their parents and their teacher, Ms. Wright, were honored with a two-day, all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., which included an awards ceremony at the National Press Club.

SNAP, which stands for School Network for Absenteeism Prevention, is a grassroots, education-based effort to improve health by making hand cleaning an integral part of the school day. SNAP is designed to get the entire school community talking about clean hands by providing tools for incorporating hand hygiene into multiple subject areas and activities. The program is sponsored by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and The Soap and Detergent Association.

To learn more about this year’s SNAP Award recipients, including the 2008 Runners-up – Port Allegany Elementary School in Port Allegany, Pennsylvania, and Dixon Middle School in Provo, Utah – visit the **Virtual Awards Assembly**. Interested educators can learn more about the 2009 SNAP program and download specific information from www.itsasnap.org or by sending an email to SNAP@cleaning101.com.

Fall Cleaning

Get the jump on seasonal cleaning

Summer officially ends on September 22nd . . . so how about marking it with a bout of spring cleaning?! While that may sound like a contradiction in terms, stop and think about it. Warm summer months means vacations away from home and more time spent outdoors. But while you were out enjoying yourself, dirt and grime didn't take a vacation. They sat around the house, accumulating and multiplying. And, now, with the winter months ahead and the holiday seasons rushing in upon us, it's an ideal time to get a thorough house cleaning under way!

Take Stock

Before you begin, take inventory of your cleaning supplies, recommends Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association. Make sure you have the products you need for the surfaces you plan on cleaning. Review the information on the product labels to make sure you are using them properly. As you clean, pay attention to where your products are stored. You may decide that future cleaning will be more efficient if you keep sets of supplies in different parts of the house – for example, one set on each floor, or an extra set in the master bedroom suite or in the laundry room. Be sure you store your items where children and pets can't get to them. Also consider adding a small hand-held vacuum in various locations so it's easy to scoop crumbs off the kitchen floor, hair from the bathroom countertop, and dust from the den.

Expand Your Reach

Go beyond the usual vacuuming, mopping and dusting. Look up and get rid of the cobwebs that have accumulated in the corners and around the light fixtures and ceiling fans. If necessary, invest in a telescoping extension pole so you can adjust it to the length you need for dusting those high-up places. Move the furniture and send those dust bunnies scurrying. Wipe down the baseboards.

Tackle the Refrigerator

Check its contents for expiration dates. Discard anything that has overstayed its welcome. Then remove and clean each shelf. Work one shelf at a time so that food won't have to stand out at room temperature. Once the inside is clean, take a look at the outside. Dust and lint buildup can reduce the cooling performance of your refrigerator. Remove the grille and vacuum the coils or clean them with a long-handled brush. If it's not a built-in model, pull it away from the wall and vacuum or sweep behind it.

Launder Lavishly

Launder all washable comforters, mattress covers, pillows, bed skirts, curtains, blankets, throws and slipcovers. Turn mattresses and vacuum them thoroughly.

Refurbish the Furniture and Care for the Carpet

Take a close look at your upholstery. Remove the cushions and vacuum thoroughly, using the crevice tool to get into those hard-to-reach places. Check the carpet for spots and stains. This may be the time for deep cleaning all these surfaces.

Handwashing as a Defense Against Disease

It's a universally-effective strategy

Question: What do conjunctivitis, chicken pox, food poisoning, measles, Hepatitis A and the common cold have in common? Answer: According to *Against Disease: The Impact of Hygiene and Cleanliness on Health*, a book recently published by The Soap and Detergent Association, they're just a few in the long list of illnesses that can be avoided or controlled by good personal hygiene, environmental hygiene and/or household cleaning. *Against Disease* is a concise, 117-page book that presents an historical and technical record of the role of sanitation, medical advances, cleanliness and hygiene on public health and infection control. Available through www.againstdisease.com, it's a valuable resource for professionals and students in the medical, sanitation, education and public health fields.

The book points out a very important concept: there's an effective disease prevention strategy that *everyone* can practice. Key to good personal hygiene is frequent, thorough and proper handwashing. This means scrubbing your hands for at least 15-20 seconds, using soap and warm running water. For added protection, turn off the faucet with a paper towel. Dry your hands with an air dryer or clean paper towel. When soap and water aren't available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer or disinfectant wipes will do the job. Developing the handwashing habit – before and after food preparation, as well as after coughing or sneezing, using the bathroom, changing diapers and playing with pets – can stop germs in their tracks.

Stars and Stripes . . . Clean and Bright

How to give Old Glory the care it deserves

From Flag Day through Labor Day, summer is flag-flying season. Whether your American flag has been flying all summer long, or has just made a Labor Day appearance, Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, has some tips for giving it the good care it deserves.

- **Mount the flag where it can fly free** and unencumbered. If it flutters or waves against another surface (tree, gutter, fence, house, etc.), it'll wear out faster.
- **Check for rips and tears.** Periodic checking and prompt repair will help prolong its life.
- **If the flag is displayed indoors or in a sheltered location, vacuum it periodically** to remove dust and loose dirt. To do this, spread the flag out on a flat surface (but not on the ground – touching the ground is considered disrespectful to the flag). Cover the vacuum's brush attachment with a piece of cheesecloth and then gently pat the fabric to remove the particles.

- **If the flag is stained or dirty**, it should be dry cleaned or gently washed by hand. For most fabrics, dry cleaning is the preferred method. Many drycleaners will clean a U.S. flag free of charge. Some will do it anytime as a good-will gesture; some will do it around major patriotic holidays; and some will do it if you're bringing other items in to be cleaned. Contact your local drycleaner to inquire about their policy.
- **If you decide to hand wash your flag**, fill a wash basin or sink with cool water and a mild detergent. Gently scrub any spots or stains. Rinse thoroughly. Lay it out flat to dry. If desired, the flag can be ironed. Just be sure it doesn't touch the ground during the drying or the ironing process.

When a flag is so worn that it's no longer serviceable, be sure that it's destroyed in a dignified manner. Most American Legion posts regularly conduct a dignified flag-burning ceremony. Many Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops and Girl Scout troops also retire flags regularly. Contact your local American Legion hall or Scout troop to inquire about the availability of this service.

Fido Needs a Family

Cleaning tips for when a pet joins the household

If you've been thinking about adopting a dog, there's never been a better time. Animal shelters in many parts of the country are overcrowded because the economic downturn has caused a matching decline in pet adoptions. To help find new homes for human's best friend, the ASPCA has designated October as Adopt-a-Shelter-Dog Month.

Housebreaking a puppy requires patience. The ASPCA recommends employing the three C's: Consistency – a regular schedule of walking and feeding; Confinement – in a crate if necessary, to build bladder and bowel control; and Cleaning – clean up accidents promptly and then treat the spot with an odor neutralizer.

Bringing a new pet into your household presents some additional cleaning challenges, says Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, particularly if there are family members who suffer from asthma or allergies.

- **Vacuum regularly** to keep up with the pet hair. An upright vacuum or a canister style with a nozzle will pick up two to six times as much dust

from a rug as canisters without a power nozzle. Be sure to move the pet to another space when you vacuum; otherwise, the noise may upset him.

- **Brush the dog frequently.** If possible, do it outside, away from those with allergies. When you're finished, wash your hands with soap and water.
- **Pet-proof the environment.** Tuck electrical cords out of the way. Install safety latches in lower kitchen cabinets. Don't leave small items around that might be mistaken for chew toys. And don't leave any type of cleaning liquid out where pets might be tempted to take a drink.
- **Wash food dishes daily.** Otherwise, they can be a magnet for ants and other crawly critters.
- **Choose a pet bed with washable, removable cushion covers** to make cleaning easier.
- **Put a washable blanket or throw over your pet's favorite chair** or corner of the sofa. Have multiple covers so that one is available while the other is in the wash.

Clean Homes ... Healthy Families Award

Recognizing NEAFCS members for innovative educational programs

The Soap and Detergent Association will honor the National Extension Association for Family & Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) Clean Homes ... Healthy Families Award winners for their innovative educational programs that link clean homes and good health at the 2008 Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) Galaxy III Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, September 15-19. Award recipients will receive a \$500 cash award.

Congratulations to the following award recipients:

- **VeEtta Simmons**, County Extension Agent for University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension, Marion, Arkansas. Honored for her educational program for school-age children about the why, how and when of handwashing.
- **Sheila Fawbush** and **Regina Browning**, County Extension Agents for the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, Shelbyville, Kentucky. Honored for their team's work to teach children important kitchen responsibilities including handwashing and cleaning up when finished.

For more information about this and other awards available through The Soap and Detergent Association, visit [SDA's new Awards page](#).

Clean Hands Across the Globe

An international effort fosters good health through handwashing

The United Nations General Assembly designated 2008 as the International Year of Sanitation. Global Handwashing Day, which will take place on Wednesday, October 15, is the centerpiece of this effort. The goal of this first-ever event, designed to echo and reinforce the call for improved hygiene practices, is to mobilize millions of people in more than 20 countries across five continents to wash their hands with soap.

People all over the world wash their hands with water. The belief that washing with water alone to remove visible dirt is sufficient to make hands clean is commonplace in many countries. However, because handwashing with soap is the single most cost-effective health intervention, there is a critical need to educate people regarding the benefits of adding soap to their personal hygiene regime.

According to UNICEF, *State of the World's Children 2008*, diarrheal diseases and pneumonia are responsible for the majority of childhood deaths. Because of these diseases, each year more than 3.5 million children don't live to celebrate their

fifth birthday. Yet, despite its lifesaving potential, handwashing with soap is seldom practiced and not always easy to promote. Doing so requires initiatives that appeal not necessarily to health, but to other things that people value in their culture, such as comfort, social status, nurture and a wish to avoid disgust. Programs that concentrate on these values have been much more successful than conventional promotion campaigns based on what experts believe a target population should do. To this end, partnerships among national and local governments, international organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and both multinational and local soap manufacturers can be extremely effective in promoting handwashing with soap. They combine the health objectives of the public sector, the marketing expertise of the private sector and often the community knowledge of NGOs, to create a more far-reaching and beneficial impact than any of the three could achieve on their own.

Click [here](#) for more information about Global Handwashing Day and to download the Planner's Guide.

Cleaning Questions? *Ask Nancy!*

Q: My kids carved the pumpkin and made a mess. How do I get the stains and guts out of my carpet?

A: Start by scraping up as much of the excess as possible. A solution of one tablespoon of liquid hand-dishwashing detergent and two cups of warm water will remove many food stains on carpets. Using a clean white cloth, gently sponge the stain with the detergent solution. Then blot with a dry part of the cloth to absorb the stain. Repeat sponging and blotting until the stain disappears. As a final step, sponge with cold water and blot dry.

Q: Our school is very proactive in teaching our students about the importance of handwashing for good health. However, we're always looking for new ways to get the kids' attention. Do you have any ideas?

A: Done properly, handwashing is the best way to protect children from cold and flu germs. The recipe for success involves soap, warm running water and gentle scrubbing for at least twenty seconds. So how can kids learn how to measure 20 seconds? Singing a tune that lasts for that amount of time is a good way! Two verses of the "Happy Birthday" song will do it, but there are many other tunes that would work. October 5-11 is the eighth annual National Carry a Tune Week. The week was established to remember favorite tunes from the past. The only criteria for participating are to use tunes that are of American origin that are at least 10 years old and from any of the following categories: patriotic music, folk music, religious music, popular music, classical music or film music. This is a great way to tie handwashing into the curriculum, such as, music or history. Students can even pick a "tune of the day" and then vote for their favorite as "tune of the week." You can find resource materials and lists of tunes by visiting the **[American Music Preservation website](#)**.

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

Clean Ideas

Keeping New Clothes Looking New

Tips for prolonging the life of your wardrobe

With the economic climate putting a strain on disposable dollars, it's more important than ever to make sure you get the most for your money. Making wise purchases is one part of this strategy. Taking good care of the things you buy – so that they continue to look good and last longer – is the other part. So, here are some strategies to keep your wardrobe in the best possible condition, for the longest possible time.

- 1. Protect your clothes from stains caused by personal grooming aids.** Before getting dressed, apply makeup, perfume, cologne, hairspray, etc. and make sure your deodorant is dry.
- 2. Fold knit garments** and store them on a shelf or in a drawer. Hanging them puts strain on the fabric which can distort their shape.
- 3. Pitch those wire hangers** in favor of padded ones that are kinder to the silhouette of your clothes.
- 4. Treat stains promptly.** Keep a stain pen, a stain stick or stain wipes in your purse, your briefcase, your desk, your glove compartment – any place that's handy so you can do stain first aid at a moment's notice.
- 5. Read and follow the garments' care label instructions.** They are your roadmap to wardrobe longevity!
- 6. Use the right amount of detergent.** Check the product labels to be sure. Too little detergent won't get your clothes clean; too much detergent can leave a dingy residue.
- 7. Don't over-dry.** Too much time in the dryer will make clothes old before their time.
- 8. Don't overdo the dry cleaning.** Many dry-clean-only garments, particularly wools and wool blends, don't require cleaning after every wearing. Hang them up, use a clothes brush to whisk off the day's dust and grime, and then let them air out overnight.
- 9. Use an in-home dryer kit for light dry cleaning.** It's more economical than a professional cleaner and works great for light soils and garments that need to be refreshed.
- 10. Rediscover the art of mending.** By repairing a hem, replacing worn or broken buttons, or re-stitching a popped seam, you've put the garment back into wardrobe circulation.

For more laundering facts and a guide to garment care symbols go to cleaning101.com/laundry.