



# CLEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

475 Park Avenue South New York, New York 10016

## A FAMILY GUIDE TO BETTER HEALTH Preparing for the Cold Season

### The Cold Facts

An estimated 60 million days of school and 50 million days of work are lost each year because of the common cold! Many colds come home with our children. In fact, young children average six colds each year. Since children's immune systems are not fully developed, it's no wonder they get sick easier and more often than adults. In fact, children between the ages of 2 and 6 get colds twice as often as 9-year-olds and 9-year-olds get colds twice as often as 12-year-olds. Teaching children good cleanliness habits is one step toward helping prevent the spread of infectious diseases this season. And, handwashing is a very important cleanliness habit to practice.

### The Invisible Germ

No matter how closely you look, you can't see germs with your naked eye. But they live around us every day. In fact, germs live on dry surfaces for hours and on moist surfaces for up to three days. Simple, everyday activities and habits often spread germs....for instance:

- Sharing drinking glasses or eating utensils
- Coughing or sneezing into a phone
- Putting a toy into the mouth
- Coughing or sneezing into your hands and not washing them afterward
- Leaving used tissues around
- Using the toilet and not washing your hands

Remember, it takes only a few little germs to spread the common cold, sore throat or flu! Washing your hands often will remove germs and help keep you and your family healthy.

### Rub-A-Dub-Dub...and Scrub!

There's more to handwashing than you might think. By rubbing and scrubbing your soapy hands together, you pull the dirt plus the greasy and oily soils

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1991

A FAMILY GUIDE TO BETTER HEALTH Preparing for the Cold Season	1
DETERGENT PHOSPHATES Part I: Phosphates in Laundry Products	2
TRAVEL CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR SKIN Moisture Loss, the Culprit	2
THE CHANGING BATHROOM From Utility to Luxury	3
FIFTH-GENERATION CARPETING Special Stain-resistant Features	3
FASHIONABLE, HIGH-TECH REFRIGERATORS New Models Offer Many Options	4
MISCELLANY	
Laundry Room Plans	4
All Steamed Up	4
Stonewashed Denim Starts A Trend	4
Bathtub Safety	5
Scent Sense	5
WHAT'S NEW?	5
"KEEP IT CLEAN" BRIEFS	6

free from your skin. The soap lather suspends both the dirt and soils; the warm running water washes them away; and naturally, the germs trapped inside the lather are quickly washed away at the same time. ■





## DETERGENT PHOSPHATES

### Part I: Phosphates in Laundry Products

The discussion over the use of phosphates in laundry products has been continuing since the 1960's. In the 1990's as environmental concerns become more and more important, this discussion will remain important to environmentally conscious consumers and manufacturers.

*What are phosphates and why are they important to detergent formulations?*

Phosphate is the base ingredient of phosphorus, a naturally occurring element. Phosphates are used in some detergents as the sequestering builder used to inactivate water hardness minerals and hold them in solution (to soften water); this increases the efficiency of the surfactant, particularly in hard water. In addition, phosphates furnish the necessary alkalinity for cleaning. They reduce redeposition of dirt by keeping the dirt particles in suspension as well as emulsify oily and greasy soils. Phosphates are popular builders because of their effectiveness, reasonable cost, and safety for use with appliances, fabrics and humans. Importantly, they are non toxic to aquatic life as well.

*Why the controversy?*

In combination with other nutrients like carbon, nitrogen, potassium, etc., phosphates nourish algae and plant growth in lakes and streams. This process of fertilization is called eutrophication. It occurs naturally but is speeded up by the activities of man as we contribute waste to the water. Lack of oxygen for fish is one of the consequences of the eutrophication of water.

Only about 25 to 30% of the phosphorus in wastewater comes from laundry detergents with the remainder coming from human waste and food waste. Detergents contribute only 3% of the phosphorus annually entering U.S. surface waters. Nevertheless, one way legislators have dealt with localized problems of eutrophication is to ban or restrict the amount of phosphate in detergents.

There is no federal regulation in the U.S. banning or restricting the levels of phosphate in laundry detergents. However, there are statewide bans in

Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, North Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania (effective 3/1/91). In addition, there are bans in some counties in Ohio, Montana and Idaho and municipal bans in Chicago, IL; Akron, OH; Washington, D.C.; Portland, OR; Spokane, WA and smaller communities in Illinois, New Hampshire and Idaho. Restrictions limiting the use of phosphate in detergent to 8.7% and/or 7 grams per use are in effect in Maine, Connecticut and Florida.

From a use standpoint, recent technology has provided improved phosphate-free laundry products. For example, liquid laundry detergents, which contain no phosphate, now have half of the market in some areas. Parenthetically, no way has been found to replace phosphate in critical cleaning operations such as automatic dishwashing in homes, restaurants and institutions, and the cleaning-in-place of food and beverage equipment such as is found in dairies. ■

### TRAVEL CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR SKIN Moisture Loss, the Culprit

A parched, lined complexion, acne breakouts, dry and/or itchy skin and dull, unmanageable hair may be the unwelcome side effects of jet-age travelers, warns The Soap and Detergent Association. The culprits include airports and plane cabins that are low in humidity, the stress and anxiety of travel as well as the disruption of sleeping, eating and exercise regimes.

To avoid moisture loss, drink plenty of water, starting several days before a trip, and cut back on the intake of foods and beverages high in sodium, alcohol and caffeine. Protect the body with a barrier that seals in moisture. The day before the trip, take a warm bath and apply extra-rich cream to still-damp skin. Also, apply a heavier-than-usual moisturizer to the face and a deep conditioner to the hair. Be sure to pack cleansers, moisturizers, sunscreens and haircare products that offer protection from the heat or cold of the destination. ■

## THE CHANGING BATHROOM

### From Utility to Luxury

Spurred on by the increasing popularity of saunas and spas, bathrooms are undergoing a dramatic transformation. Once merely a utility room, the bathroom is fast becoming a luxurious and therapeutic retreat, observes The Soap and Detergent Association.

While newly constructed homes routinely include amply sized and well-appointed bathrooms, owners of older homes have found creative ways to expand their existing facilities. Extra bedrooms and closets can be incorporated into master bedroom/bath suites. Enclosed porches can be converted into spa rooms. Existing bathrooms can be updated with a spa tub taking the place of a traditional bathtub.

A spa tub has several advantages over a regular spa. Installation is easier because it can be hooked up to the house's plumbing system. And, since the water temperature is regulated by the tap, there's no need for the standard spa heater. Like the traditional bathtub, the water empties down the existing drain after each use rather than remaining in the spa. Bubble bath, strictly forbidden in regular spas, can be used in the spa tub.

The spa tub is most popular in the one to two-person size. Where a larger size is desired, consumers tend to prefer the portable standard spa. If installed in the bathroom, this spa is generally in addition to the regular tub. Often it is the focal point of a separate spa room. Several features make it an ideal choice for either location. First, no special plumbing is required. Second, the heater, pump and other necessary equipment are all housed in the cabinet that surrounds the spa itself. Finally, the unit can be plugged in or, if higher voltage is needed, wired by an electrician. If the spa must be brought into the house through a standard-size door, check the door size to make sure it will fit.

Like a swimming pool, the water in a spa is not emptied after each use. However, the chlorine odor resulting from bacteria and algae control is a drawback for many consumers. One manufacturer has solved this problem via an ionization system using electricity applied to copper and silver anodes. The copper kills the algae while the silver destroys the bacteria. ■

## FIFTH-GENERATION CARPETING

### Special Stain-resistant Features

While new developments in stain resistance are the hallmarks of fifth-generation carpeting, regular vacuuming and immediate attention to stains are still the best way to prolong the life of the carpet, reports The Soap and Detergent Association.

Synthetic fibers including nylon, polypropylene and polyester, have captured the market once dominated by traditional wool. Nylon accounts for about three-quarters of the synthetic fiber market and is fashioned into carpets that are specially treated so there can be some time leeway between the impact and cleanup of a stain.

Nylon is colored with acid-based dye stuffs. This makes the fiber susceptible to further dyeing from acid-based stains, particularly those caused by artificial food coloring and products with citrus flavors or colors. To combat this, manufacturers are now treating nylon fibers with acid dye blockers. These blockers act like a colorless dye, closing up spots along the fibers that may have been left unfilled by the original dyeing process. As a result, these spots are protected from acid-based soil and stain damage. The most common processes for dyeing and treating nylon fibers also include treatment with a fluorochemical such as Teflon. The result is an increased ability to repel common oil and water-based soil.

Fresh stains on a nylon carpet can often be cleaned with water and blotting, while a topical treatment of stain remover can usually handle other stains. Detergents should be avoided as they can have a negative effect on stain resistant nylon carpeting. For light cleaning, use carpet cleaning products formulated specially for this new carpeting. For routine maintenance, the vacuum cleaner is still the carpet's best friend. If loose soil is left in the carpet, regular traffic will cause it to scuff the fibers, promoting future stains. Vacuuming not only helps the carpet maintain its appearance and texture, but also aids the stain preventing treatment in doing its job. For deep-down cleaning, professional steam extraction or dry extraction every eighteen months is the best way to protect the carpeting. ■





## **FASHIONABLE, HIGH-TECH REFRIGERATORS**

### **New Models Offer Many Options**

Refrigerators have finally come into their own as a fashionable part of the kitchen. Gone are the days when color choices were limited to white, almond or black. Today's options include customized wood, stainless steel, glass, acrylic and leather-look panels to coordinate with virtually any kitchen decor. When it comes time to remodel or redecorate, there's no need to replace a still-serviceable refrigerator because new panels can be purchased to complement the new surroundings.

High-tech developments include computerized models with energy-saver buttons, temperature displays and settings, plus a monitoring system that lights up to indicate when the door is ajar, when the temperature is unsafe and when the condenser coils need to be cleaned. Built-in refrigerators that align with the kitchen cabinets are now available. Under-the-counter refrigerators provide handy storage for sodas, wine or frequently used items.

Easy care features are high on consumers' shopping lists, reports The Soap and Detergent Association. Although it adds \$50 - \$100 to the cost, most consumers consider the frost-free option a labor-saving essential. Glass shelves are much easier to clean than wire ones and prevent spills from dripping through to the shelves below. Adjustable drawer bins provide easier access, while humidity controlled crisper drawers keep fruits and vegetables fresher longer. Ice makers and on-the-door water and ice dispensers are handy features particularly appreciated by thirsty families.

While traditional models with refrigerator on the bottom and freezer on the top are generally less expensive to buy and run, space and family needs may make other models more desirable. Bottom freezers offer the same size unit with a slightly larger freezer capacity. Side-by-sides have a narrower door swing making them more space efficient, but they may have a larger exterior than comparable top-freezer units. Many consumers, especially those with children, prefer side-by-sides so everything is easily accessible. In addition to these larger sizes, several manufacturers are marketing new, smaller sizes. Both include features such as deep storage doors to hold a gallon of milk and slide-out and adjustable shelves, bins and baskets. ■

## **MISCELLANY**

### **Laundry Room Plans**

The traditional laundry room tucked far away in a basement corner may not earn high marks for convenience and efficiency. When planning for a new or remodeled home, The Soap and Detergent Association suggests that a simple home audit will help determine the ideal laundry location. The family's lifestyle is an important consideration. If children help with the laundry or it's usually done while preparing dinner, the kitchen area may be best. For others, a location in tandem with a hobby or project room may be preferred. Just off the bath, where most laundry accumulates, may be the most practical choice. Easy access to water, drain plumbing, electric and gas lines will affect the cost. Other factors to consider are easy venting for the dryer, adequate lighting and appropriate space for other features such as room between wall studs for a built-in ironing board.

### **All Steamed Up**

The increasing demand for food that is fresh, tasty and nutritional, combined with the need for time-saving cooking methods, has resulted in the re-emergence of the pressure cooker, observes The Soap and Detergent Association. These utensils heat food evenly in about one-third the time of conventional boiling or steaming. And, unlike these methods, there is little loss of heat-sensitive vitamins, such as Vitamin C and Thiamine.

Busy cooks are finding that the pressure cooker is the perfect answer for two areas where the microwave falls short - cooking in quantity and making foods that benefit from long, slow cooking such as chili or soup. A variety of locks and backup safety features on this new generation of pressure cookers ensures that excess steam can escape and that the cook cannot accidentally open the pot while steam pressure is still high.

### **Stonewashed Denim Starts A Trend**

Stonewashed treatments, which give the fabric a softer hand and a textured effect, first gained popularity with denim blue jeans but are now expanding into a host of fabrics, from twills to knits



to cotton sheeting. According to information gathered by The Soap and Detergent Association, consumers are responding to the relaxed and less pretentious look of these fabrics. Variations on the stonewashed theme include overdyeing in black and indigo, a heavy stonewash with bleach, and longer periods of abrasion for more interesting texture. One used-look denim (new denim that has been abraded to the point where it begins to show wear) is specially treated to retain its dark color. Another experimental denim involves using a shotgun and a bleach wash, giving the fabric a pockmarked effect.

### Bathtub Safety

Bathtime can be fun and relaxing for kids. But, cautions The Soap and Detergent Association, it's a time for adults to be on the alert.

Always check the water temperature with your hand before putting the child in the bathtub---if the water's too hot for you, it's also too hot for a child. Add cold water and test the temperature again with your other hand. When the water feels comfortable to you, it will be comfortable for the child.

Once in the bath, never leave a youngster alone, even for a second. It takes no time at all for him to turn on the hot water and get burned. If something urgent requires your attention, take the child out of the tub and carry him or her with you.

### Scent Sense

If used properly, fragrance can be an enchanting way to enhance one's image. Skin type affects headiness. Because oils in the skin intensify the smell, people with oily skin should apply fragrance sparingly. Those with dry skin should layer their scent, using the same fragrance for soap, body lotion (or body splash or powder) and cologne or perfume.

Because heat intensifies a perfume's potency, The Soap and Detergent Association recommends a light application on hot, humid days or when rooms are overheated. Some other tips: Don't hoard an opened bottle for special occasions. The contents will oxidize and evaporate. And don't refrigerate fragrances. While the cool splash may feel refreshing, the chill can actually dilute the scent. ■

### WHAT'S NEW?

Only the touch will tell! Armor Cloth, a fabric with the easy care properties of vinyl, is treated with a stain-proof, water-resistant substance that adds a soft sheen to the cloth without the heaviness of vinyl.

Treated table fashions include placemats and tablecloths that coordinate with cloth napkins, potholders and oven mitts.

(Made by: Decor Home Fashions; 295 Fifth Avenue; New York, NY 10010)

The Wacky Vac, an attachment designed with adaptors to fit most standard vacuums including cordless hand vacs, is perfect for cleaning hard-to-reach places such as computer keyboards, air conditioners and inside drawers. The unit, which features twenty-five suction pipes with soft brushes, will be available through mass merchandisers, supermarkets and retail stores.

(Made by: Ideaworks, Inc.; 15237 Sunset Boulevard; Pacific Palisades, CA 90272)

The Shave-in-Shower is a non-electric razor that attaches to the shower head, giving women the convenience of shaving and showering at the same time. Water flows through the hose to prevent skin irritation from the blade. The unit is sold separately or packaged with a Pollenex shower massager.

(Made by: Pollenex; 165 North Canal Street; Chicago, IL 60606)

The Shower Wiper helps remove excess water off shower doors and walls to leave them looking clean. The easy-to-use, hand-held, twelve-inch wide tool uses the same principle as equipment used by professional window washers.

(Made by: Mallory Industries, Inc.; P.O. Box 190; Blenheim, ON, NOP 1A0)

A new line of professional quality, stainless steel cookware features a durable never-stick cooking surface with a twenty-year guarantee. The manufacturer claims the Millennium Never-Stick has great stain resistance, allows searing and pan-frying with little or no fats or oils and can be cleaned with steel wool pads. Metal utensils will not harm the surface.

(Made by: Faberware, Inc.; 1500 Bassett Avenue; Bronx, NY 10461) ■





## "KEEP IT CLEAN" BRIEFS

To avoid spreading germs, the best wipes to use for cleaning are disposable paper towels or other throw aways. If you use sponges or non-disposable cleaning cloths, rinse them in clean water and let them dry thoroughly after each use. Remember, germs thrive on moist surfaces! Launder sponges or cleaning cloths on a regular basis, adding chlorine bleach to the wash water.

A common holiday stain on table linens is candle wax. For best results, try to remove the stain while it is still fresh. Scrape off excess wax with a dull knife, then place the stained area between two layers of clean paper towels and press with a warm iron. Replace paper towels frequently to absorb as much wax as possible. When the wax build up has been removed, place the stain face down on clean paper towels and sponge with prewash stain remover or cleaning fluid; blot with paper towels; let dry. Launder in hottest water possible for the fabric, using detergent and a bleach safe for the fabric.

Underuse of detergent is the most common cause of unsuccessful laundering. Underuse can cause greyness and yellowing due to a build up of body soil and poor soil removal.

Shower curtains can be laundered easily. Put them in the washer with a couple of towels and the recommended amount of laundry detergent.

Can you solve this laundry mystery? A sheet turns up with bleach holes in it. Why? Answer: Undiluted bleach was poured directly onto the fabric or too much bleach was used. Or, possibly the sheet was allowed to soak too long in a strong bleach solution. Be sure to read labels and follow the bleach manufacturer's package instructions.

A few tips on food safety: Keep cold foods cold by freezing sandwiches the night before or packing them with a can of frozen juice. Keep hot foods hot by using a thermos. Wash lunch boxes thoroughly after each use in a solution of warm water and hand dishwashing detergent. And, always wash hands before handling food. ■

This newsletter is not copyrighted. The content may be used at will, with or without credit to The Soap and Detergent Association. Mention of product names or manufacturers does not constitute an endorsement by the Association and/or its member companies.

The Soap and Detergent Association  
475 Park Avenue South  
New York, New York 10016

FIRST CLASS U. S. POSTAGE <b>PAID</b> New York, N. Y. Permit No. 770
--

**ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED**

