



# CLEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

475 Park Avenue South New York, New York 10016

## PREVENT ACCIDENTAL POISON EXPOSURES Safe Handling of Cleaning Products

With active participants such as The Soap and Detergent Association, each year in March during National Poison Prevention Week, more Americans learn about reducing the number of accidental exposures to poisons in the home. This effort, in combination with America's national network of regional poison control centers and an increase in child-resistant packaging, has significantly reduced the number of poisonings in children.

Last year, approximately 1.6 million accidental exposures were reported, and 1.1 million of them happen to young children. Although only about 10% of these accidents involved household cleaning products, the soap and detergent industry takes an active role in prevention programs. While exposure to many cleaning products does not cause serious medical problems, there are some products, such as oven, drain or toilet bowl cleaners, which may present a significant potential hazard. Packaging hazardous products in child-resistant containers reduces the chance of exposure, but it is important they be closed properly and kept out of reach.

Accidental exposure to cleaning products occurs most often to children under six, with one and two-year-olds being the most vulnerable. The riskiest times for accidents are the busiest times of the day. In the home, this is between 4PM and 8PM when activity and distractions are at their peak. And, in about half the cases, exposure occurs while the product is being used.

Some simple precautions can help prevent these accidental exposures. Begin by storing cleaning products in a locked closet or cabinet, away from food products and in an area not accessible to young children. Remove the amount needed for the cleaning job, then

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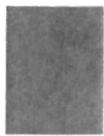
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immediately put the product away. Schedule routine cleaning when there is a lull in activities and when children are not around. Store products in their original containers and never remove product labels. Be careful of distractions when cleaning --- a telephone call or knock at the door is an opportunity for a curious child to swallow a cleaning solution or fall into a bucket of water.

If someone accidentally swallows a household cleaning product or gets a product in his/her eye, call the 800# listed on the product label or your local poison control center. ■





## ENERGY AND APPLIANCES

### Saving Money with A New Appliance

Replacing an old appliance with a new one can do more than enhance one's decor. With today's energy efficient models, it can save hundreds of dollars over the lifetime of the new appliance.

Some appliances, such as ranges and dryers, have always operated efficiently. Others, such as microwave ovens and trash compactors, use such little energy that savings on new models is minimal. But when it comes to refrigerators, washers and dishwashers, most 15 to 30 year old models can be classified as energy guzzlers compared to their newer versions. Savings in operating costs, along with the benefits of new design, technology and features, may make them good candidates for early replacement, suggests The Soap and Detergent Association. For example, a refrigerator manufactured today uses about 47% of the energy that its 1972 counterpart consumes. For washing machines, the figure is about 28%, based on 8 cycles per week; for dishwashers, about 30%, based on 6.2 cycles per week. More big changes are in store for refrigerators and freezers manufactured after January 1, 1993. The Department of Energy has ruled that these newest models must improve their energy efficiency ratio to an average of 25% higher than present models.

To determine the true cost of a new appliance, consider the purchase price as only the down payment. Multiply the yearly cost of operating the appliance by its life expectancy and add this figure to the purchase price. To help consumers gauge the yearly cost, the Federal Trade Commission has developed rules for labeling appliance energy consumption. Look for the black, yellow and white EnergyGuide label in the form of a hangtag, flaptag or sticker. This label will display a single estimated annual cost figure based on "typical use."

To maintain energy savings, the new appliance should be used efficiently. Read and follow the manufacturer's recommendations. In addition, the new appliance should really replace the old one. If the old one is simply moved to a new location and used as a "spare," its high monthly operating expense continues. ■

## A BEDROOM FOR THE '90'S

### An Overnight Escape At Home

According to reports received by The Soap and Detergent Association, the average American spends more than four months a year in his or her bedroom. Today's consumers use their bedrooms for a variety of non-sleeping activities, including watching television, talking on the phone, exercising, eating and listening to music. Where household space is limited, some bedrooms must still do double duty as a work area. However, because of the growing proliferation of home office equipment, including computers, faxes and answering machines, the increase in separate home offices, and the psychological need to distinguish between the work environment and the personal environment, this trend is decreasing. While bedrooms aren't just for sleeping any more, the focus is definitely on relaxation.

The ideal '90's bedroom includes an attached bath, generous closets and his-and-hers dressing rooms. Other items on the bedroom "wish list" include a fireplace, a separate sitting area and an outdoor deck or terrace off the bedroom. While these amenities may require major physical renovations, other do not. Posh comforters, crisp linens, king-size beds, a good sound system, bedside remote controls for lights and electronic equipment and comfortable seating are easy to add to any bedroom. Dressing tables are making a comeback, adding 1940's glamour to a 1990's room. Bowls of potpourri and scented candles add a romantic touch. For late-night snacking, even if it's fruit and bottled water, consider a small refrigerator.

Good lighting is another important ingredient in the bedroom of the '90's. This means overall mood lighting, plus specific lighting for tasks such as reading in bed. Because they help keep bedside tables clutter free, many interior designers recommend wall-hung reading lamps. By adding dimmer switches, the mood of the room can be changed at the flick of a wrist.

Even small closets can feel luxurious if they are well organized. Storage boxes, shoe bags, and double rods help provide a place for everything. ■



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Cleaning Products...  
In Our Homes,  
In Our Environment



All materials in conjunction with SDA's 1992 national videoconference, *Cleaning Products... In Our Homes, In Our Environment*, are now available. The videoconference featured the latest information from expert speakers on environmental issues in the soap and detergent industry, as well as on the safe and effective use of cleaning products, and new developments in products and their packaging.

The **videotape** runs approximately 2 1/2 hours and includes all presentations, reactor panel segments, questions and answers, and environmental moments. For ease of viewing, an accompanying information sheet details the sequence of speakers and their approximate position on the tape. The cost of the videotape is \$30, which includes shipping and handling.

The **printed proceedings** (60 pages) include all presentations, reactor panel segments, questions and answers, and environmental moments. There is no charge for the proceedings.

A **community education program** includes a presenter's guide, copies for overhead transparencies and consumer handouts for two topics: Household Cleaning Product and Package Disposal and Read the Label on Household Cleaning Products (includes information on mix-at-home cleaning recipes). There is no charge for the education program.

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Make check payable to **The Soap and Detergent Association.**

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**SKIN CARE RITUALS****Five Easy Choices**

Everyone agrees that clean, fresh-looking skin is a beauty asset. Unfortunately, even the experts don't agree on the most effective way to get it. Some feel soap and water is the only way to go, while others claim that soap strips skin of its natural oils. While the alternatives may be good for some people, others may experience complexion flare ups. Knowledge is the key to choosing a cleansing product that suits your complexion, your budget and your time constraints, observes The Soap and Detergent Association.

Soap and water is one of the oldest cleansing processes around. While many bar soaps are fine, some deodorant bars may be too harsh for the face. Beauty bars or soap bars advertised for use on the face are gentler for more delicate facial skin.

Cleansing creams fall into two categories. "Rinse-off" creams are primarily soap or detergent, with just a bit of oil for softening. "Tissue-off" products usually have a high oil content. Women with oily or acne-prone skin should avoid the latter. Some cleansing creams can be either tissueed or rinsed off. To determine their oil content, check the list of ingredients; they are listed in descending order of percentage.

Toning lotions are another way to remove oil from the skin. They are designed to supplement cleansing cream or soap and water treatments. Some toners contain alcohol. The more alcohol, the more drying the toner.

In addition to eliminating dirt and oil, scrubs are designed to remove dead, dry skin cells. Some experts believe this process can make older skin look and behave younger. Scrubs also leave a healthy glow, keep oily pores unclogged, and make the skin softer. Masks are time consuming and generally not recommended for daily cleansing. Some masks are designed to remove extra oil from greasy skin. Others replenish moisture and oils to dry skin. ■

**Q & A****Answers to Your Questions**

The following questions were asked at the Detergents - In Depth, '92 videoconference but didn't get answered because of time constraints. We will include a Q & A column in every issue of the newsletter. Write to us with your cleaning product questions and we will answer as many as possible. Write to "Cleanliness Facts" at the address listed on page 1. Please be aware that we cannot respond to questions about individual products and can only respond to questions specific to household cleaning products.

**Q: What is the toxicity of disinfectants on food preparation surfaces? Is there a cumulative effect?**

A: The ingredients in disinfectants sold for home use are tested extensively to conform to EPA standards for safe use on food surfaces. There is no cumulative effect because the levels of active ingredients are low and readily break down in the presence of organic material.

**Q: If consumers pour water soluble household cleaning products onto gravel or grass rather than into septic tanks, will proper chemical breakdown occur before reaching groundwater and wells?**

A: Household cleaning products are formulated to be disposed into municipal treatment or septic tank systems. Therefore, any other method of disposal is not appropriate.

From testing of sludge applied to agricultural land, we know that many detergent ingredients attach to soil particles. In addition, biological breakdown of the organic ingredients will occur. Under these conditions, they are benign in the environment you described.

However, proper chemical breakdown before reaching groundwater and wells depends on many factors, such as how much is being disposed, proximity to the well, how dilute the product is, etc. The safest way to dispose of cleaning products is in the way they were intended to be disposed --- into a properly maintained septic tank or municipal sewage treatment system. ■





## MISCELLANY

### Safety Cautions for Artistic Pottery

Ceramics and other artistic pottery may be beautiful to look at, but are they safe to use? The Soap and Detergent Association explains that oftentimes they are unsafe for food cooking or serving because they cannot be properly cleaned or because they contain lead which can leach into food.

If the pottery is glazed on the inside, it may be safe for liquids. If the inside is not glazed, don't use it for food; it will be impossible to clean properly. When purchasing a new artistic piece, ask if it is dishwasher, oven and microwave safe.

Dangerous lead glazes are sometimes found in U.S. pre-World War II ceramicware, as well as new pieces from Mexico, Europe, India and China. These items are unsafe for cooking or serving food. Testing, using a commercial lead-testing kit, is the only way to tell if these are lead free.

Even if they are lead free, older pieces with discolored, flaked or cracked glaze are too delicate to be washed in a dishwasher or heated in an oven. If used for serving food, add a liner, such as another dish or plastic container.

### Safety Tips for Brown Baggers

To keep that delicious home-made lunch safe and fresh until the child's lunchtime, The Soap and Detergent Association has some recommendations.

Think clean. When making the lunch, use clean utensils and a clean work surface. When packing the lunch, be sure containers and plastic bags are clean. Pack items in a new paper bag or clean lunch box.

Think cold. To prepare an insulated vacuum container, fill it with cold water and let stand for five minutes. Drain, then fill with the chilled food mixture. Chill solid foods, including meat-filled sandwiches and salads, then pack in an insulated lunch box with a frozen ice pack - or freeze a juice box and use it as an ice pack.

Think hot. Fill an insulated vacuum container with hot tap water. Drain, then fill with the hot mixture. Close the lid securely. To be safe, the food should still be hot to the touch at lunchtime.

### Functional Upholstered Furniture

Hidden storage drawers, massage units, built-in tabletops and telephones are just a few of unexpected components in upholstered furniture. One modular furniture grouping spotted by The Soap and Detergent Association features an under-the-unit storage drawer and a back cushion that folds down to reveal a table. Another manufacturer is equipping its recliners with The Lumbar, an adjustable lower back pillow that inflates or deflates to conform to individual needs.

For the ultimate in couch potato seating, another recliner features a built-in telephone, a universal remote control, a wireless receiver with headphones for television and radio, an electronically activated lumbar support system, a massage unit, numerous storage compartments, foldout tables and a cup holder.

### Water Heater Care Saves Money

Give that gas water heater some tender loving care and the reward will be lower utility bills. Here are a few tips gathered by The Soap and Detergent Association.

Good housekeeping is important. The area around the water heater should be clean and well ventilated. The pilot area should be free of dust and dirt. If the water heater is older and in a cold location, installing a fiberglass insulation jacket can save up to 15% of the water heating costs. Follow the manufacturer's instructions and do not cover air inlets, valves, faucets, controls or pipes at the bottom or the top near the exhaust vent.

To save energy, slow down lime buildup and reduce the risk of hot tap water burns, many water heaters are now shipped with the temperature settings at 120°F. However, some dishwasher manufacturers recommend a higher setting. If your dishwasher has a built-in heater, it will heat the water for you. Otherwise, for best cleaning results, the water temperature entering a dishwasher should be 130°F.



### Fume Fading

Fume fading, often called gas fading, is a problem common to both garments and carpets. It usually occurs on fabrics with acetate fibers, but can also happen on any type of fiber that is dyed with low energy, disperse dyes. Prevention lies with the manufacturers, who must use dyes resistant to fume fading or add inhibitors to minimize the problem, explains The Soap and Detergent Association.

Gaseous pollutants, such as oxides of nitrogen or sulfur, cause a gradual color change that is accelerated by sunlight, heat, high humidity and the presence of acid on the fiber. These gases stem from a variety of sources, including air contact with heated surfaces such as cooking ranges, furnaces or gas or electric heaters. The most common color changes are from blue to pink, green to yellow and brown to red. On carpets, the change starts at the tip of the tufts and progresses toward the backing. On garments, fume fading is generally more apparent in areas that have been exposed to body moisture, such as underarms, neck and waist, or where beverage or other water-soluble stains have occurred.

### Fashion Dictates

Without proper care, the acrylic knit dress that seems like such a wonderful, fashionable purchase may not hold up as well as you expect, cautions The Soap and Detergent Association.

Problems arise because many of these garments are not properly blocked or heat set during manufacturing. The fabric may stretch during wear and/or shrink from the heat and tumbling action of the laundering process.

Since at the time of purchase there is no way to tell if a garment has been properly stabilized, consumers should check the care label, then follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. If the problem still occurs, contact the retailer where the garment was purchased. ■

### WHAT'S NEW?

Keep that home office equipment super clean with Metro Data/Vac 2. The small, canister-like vac, which weighs only seven pounds, includes a toner filtration system which allows it to spot clean toner dust from laser printers and copiers. It also comes with special attachments for cleaning office equipment and computers.

(Metropolitan Vacuum Cleaner Co., Inc.;  
P.O. Box 149; One Ramapo Ave.;  
Suffern, NY 10901)

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Whip up a little something with the Dessert Machine, a sleek, Eurostyle container with dispenser nozzle that aerates whipped cream or deserts. It can also be used to make mayonnaise and other sauces. Both the pint size and quart size versions operate on replaceable cartridges that contain nitrous oxide.

In addition to the recipe book that comes with the unit, consumers can register, at no cost, with a Dessert Makers Club, which sends out recipes. (iSi Siphon of America, Inc.; 30 Chapin Road; P.O. Box 616; Pine Brook, NJ 07058)

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Late risers will love the quick convenience of BriskBrew, a single cup coffeemaker that brews coffee in minutes. It also has handy storage spots for coffee, tea, cocoa, instant soup, etc. and a collapsible stirring/measuring spoon. Other convenience features include a permanent mesh filter and automatic shut off.

(Zelco Industries, Inc.; 630 S Columbus Avenue;  
C.S. #4445; Mount Vernon, NY 10551)

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Dust, hair, lint and other small particles of dirt better watch out when the Sticky Critter is on the loose! This cleaning aid looks like a paint roller with a smooth surface. Designed for just about any surface, including carpeting, drapes, upholstery and linoleum, the long-lasting coating is the result of a new adhesion technology. To release the dirt, simply rinse with water. After air drying, use again.

(Sunshine Industries, Inc.; 1111 E 200th Street;  
Cleveland, OH 44117) ■





## "KEEP IT CLEAN" BRIEFS

To remove candle wax from washable fabrics, first scrape off the wax using a dull knife. Then, place the stained fabric between clean paper towels and press with a warm iron, replacing paper towels frequently. Place stain face down on clean paper towels. Sponge remaining stain with prewash stain remover or cleaning fluid; blot with paper towels. Let dry. Launder using detergent and a bleach safe for the fabric.

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Use a cotton dust glove to easily clean vertical or horizontal blinds. Simply run your fingers along the slats to dust or clean.

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To take advantage of every piece of soap, cut a slit in a bath sponge and insert leftover slivers of soap into the sponge. Use the soap sponge when showering or bathing.

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**Fiction:** For energy efficiency, fill the dryer with as many clothes as it will hold.

**Fact:** Don't overload the dryer. Clothes need room to tumble freely in order to dry fast and wrinkle free.

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**Fiction:** It's ok to machine launder a garment even if the care label says "Hand Wash Separately."

**Fact:** Do not machine launder a garment that recommends hand washing because the garment usually cannot withstand the agitation of the washing machine cycles. In addition, the garment may have excess dye that may bleed during washing. It should be washed alone. When hand washing instructions are given, the garment should be soaked in cool or lukewarm water for 5 - 10 minutes without twisting or agitation. It should then be gently squeezed and hung or laid flat to dry. ■

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