



CLEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

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www.cleaning101.com

NEW SDA SURVEY

Poor Handwashing in the Workplace

With cold and flu season now upon us, many people use common sense cleaning practices at home to defend the family against harmful germs. But what about the place we spend most of our waking hours — work? A new survey released by The Soap and Detergent Association (SDA) reveals that the workplace is often a weak link in the fight to prevent the contraction and spread of infectious diseases.

SDA's latest National Cleaning Survey reveals that a significant population of American workers (40 percent) neither washes their hands often enough nor long enough. In addition, the survey found most employers (58 percent) don't encourage handwashing in the workplace.

Handwashing is recognized by The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as one of the most important means of preventing germs from spreading. Americans spend billions of dollars annually battling colds and flu through medical treatments and doctor visits. On the flu alone, Americans spend \$1.3 billion on direct medical costs. Lost productivity in the workplace can add another \$15 billion to the annual tab.

"While most people can employ good cleaning habits, antibacterial products and disinfectants to fight germs at home, they have much less control over their work environment," says Nancy Bock, SDA's Director of Consumer Affairs. "That makes proper handwashing the first line of defense against germs in the workplace. Washing often, about five or more times a day, is the first step. But, you also need to wash your hands the right way, washing thoroughly with soap and water for at least 15 seconds."

Where people work appears to affect handwashing practices. The survey shows that 65 percent of maintenance and construction

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SDA Seeks Volunteers for Advisory Panel

SDA is recruiting educators nationwide to join the first ever *Cleaning 101 Consumer Education Advisory Panel*. This new panel is being created to gather information from grassroots educators to enhance SDA's consumer education programs. Panel members will be asked to participate in quarterly conference calls. No travel is required. For consideration, submit your resume and examples of how you use SDA materials in your local programming to SDA by February 1, 2002. Fax to Nancy Bock at (202) 347-4110. Selected educators will be notified by February 14.



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workers and 47 percent of office and customer service workers wash their hands less than five times a day. Half of the workers in these two groups (50 percent and 51 percent, respectively) also don't wash their hands long enough — 10 seconds or less. Medical and food service workers, on the other hand, are significantly more diligent about hand hygiene. A substantial majority washes their hands seven or more times a day (medical employees: 86 percent, food service employees: 68 percent) and for 15 seconds or more (medical employees: 69 percent, food service employees: 76 percent).

CDC recommends washing your hands with soap and water for at least 15 seconds. Here are quick hand hygiene tips recommended by the SDA, which are also available at: www.cleaning101.com.

Recommendations: When To Wash Hands At Work

- Each time you use the restroom
- *Before* and *after* staff meetings, if food is served
- After scanning newspapers or magazines
- *Before* and *after* lunch
- After using a co-worker's keyboard or tools
- *Before* and *after* a meet-and-greet activity
- When using shared office equipment, such as faxes, phones, etc.

Proper Steps To Good Hygiene: Washing Your Hands the Right Way

1. Wet hands with warm, running water prior to reaching for soap, either in bar or liquid form.
2. Rub hands together to make a lather. Do this away from running water, so the lather isn't washed away.
3. Wash the front and back of hands, between fingers and under nails. Continue washing for 15 seconds or more.
4. Rinse hands well under warm, running water.
5. Dry hands thoroughly with a clean towel or air dryer.
6. Waterless products, such as hand sanitizers and antibacterial wipes, are useful alternatives if soap and water are not available (for example, when traveling in the car or taxi on the way to a business meeting, before eating an in-flight meal or snack, outdoor work settings, etc.). ■

POST-HOLIDAY CLEAN UP Time to Get Clutter Under Control

According to the Soap and Detergent Association, there are several advantages to putting away those holiday decorations. In fact, this task can be the start of a whole new plan to declutter the house. Rather than putting things back in their usual places, use this time as an opportunity to reevaluate and reorganize your possessions.

Getting rid of excess clutter can reduce housework by 40 percent. Fewer things to move and clean means there are fewer places for dust and its allergens to accumulate. This is important for everyone, but particularly if there's a family member who suffers from asthma.

Begin by analyzing what's in the room — one room at a time. Surface clutter is easier to deal with and will produce a quicker change, so concentrate on what you can see rather than what's stored in closets and drawers. Things that don't pass the "I use it" or "I love it" test should be eliminated. Don't keep duplicates or items that are broken or outdated. Group the "keepers" together by category, so you can see everything you own at a glance. This will make it easier to determine where to store these items.

Discards generally fall into one of the following categories: trash, giveaways, tag sale, or belongs somewhere else (such as in storage or in another room). Give each category its own carton so it's easy to move items to their next destination. Giving items away to a charity may make it easier to part with them. Off-site storage for items like tax records, college memorabilia or extra furniture is another solution. If you need something, you can always go get it.

When reorganizing, store items near their point of use. Books and reading glasses go next to the reading chair. Cooking utensils go in a drawer next to the cook top. Keep accessibility and safety in mind. Don't store anything dangerously out of reach or overstuff drawers.

Once the reorganization is complete, follow the "One In, One Out" rule — nothing *new* comes in unless something *old* goes out. Make it a point to put things away as they are used. That way, daily clean up should take no more than five minutes per room, and dusting and vacuuming will become easier and faster. ■

PUTTING WINTER'S GERMS TO REST Tips for Fighting Off Viruses

In the winter months, the youngest members of the household can be the biggest source of viruses. One reason is that small children share everything, including toys, cups and utensils. And, the things they share often go in their mouths.

Young children usually don't observe the rules of personal hygiene. Small hands wipe runny noses, sticky fingers go in mouths and children must be constantly reminded about washing their hands *before* eating and *after* using the bathroom. In addition, children develop infections more easily than adults because their immune systems aren't fully developed.

Immunology experts report that the home is the source of two-thirds of the viruses that make us ill and 50 to 80 percent of foodborne illnesses. If there are small children in the home, the likelihood of illness increases. These same experts report that the greater number of germs we're exposed to, the more likely it is we'll become ill.

Waging war on all these germs means smart cleaning habits, says The Soap and Detergent Association. The goal is to reduce their levels so they don't pose a serious risk of illness.

Start with the kitchen where *E. coli* and *Salmonella* — two sources of foodborne illnesses — thrive. Hands should be washed before and after handling food. Use a disinfectant cleaning product to keep germs under control on countertops, cutting boards, dishes and utensils, and faucet and refrigerator door handles. Change dishcloths and clean sponges at least every three days.

Disinfectant cleaners will also do the job in the bathroom. Because germs thrive in moisture, the key here is to keep bathroom surfaces clean and dry.

In the laundry, *E. coli* will be destroyed by the heat of the dryer. Other fecal-borne bacteria and viruses, such as *Salmonella*, rotavirus (which causes diarrhea) and the virus that causes hepatitis A, can be attacked by washing clothes in very hot water and using bleach. Do the bleach load first to sanitize the washing machine. Surfaces that come into contact with the laundry, including folding tables, countertops and tops of washers and dryers, should also be wiped clean with a disinfectant cleaner. ■

THE COMFORT FACTOR Feel-good Products Abound

On the surface, many of today's new products may seem quite different. But, from massagers and air filtration systems to recliners and aromatherapy candles, the one thing they all have in common is they make the user feel good! This trend, which first emerged in the mid-1990s, has been intensified by recent world events, suggests The Soap and Detergent Association.

Feeling good may be the result of a general sense of well-being or an actual health benefit. To illustrate the latter, one company specializes in air filtration systems, bedding and bedding encasements, and cleaning appliances with HEPA filters. All these products are designed to reduce the presence of dust mites, microscopic beings whose presence can trigger and aggravate allergies or asthma. For those who believe in the healing power of magnets, another company offers a magnetic memory foam pillow.

Thicker mattresses, fluffier pillows and snuggler comforters are all part of the response to consumers' comfort cravings. The bedding that goes on top can be anything from silk comforters to cashmere blankets, from velour sheets to "no sweat" pillowcases and mattress covers. Products that align the spine, cushion pressure points, alleviate allergies and solve sleep problems, such as snoring and night sweats, are high on the consumer interest scale.

The dowdy old recliner chair has succumbed to fashionable, high-tech comfort with "plug in" features, such as shiatsu massage and power features that allow the chair to stop at almost any point in the recline.

When today's consumer finds a comforting scent, their wish is for it to pervade their lifestyle. As a result, there are whole families of fragrance products, including bath oils, scented candles and incense. This eliminates the sensory conflict that can arise when products with dissimilar aromas are used. ■



SWEATERS

Keeping Them Beautifully Clean and Fresh

Sweaters and winter weather just naturally go together. A wide range of fibers and an infinite variety of yarns means there's a sweater suitable for every occasion. And while some sweaters are relatively rugged, others require tender loving care, notes The Soap and Detergent Association.

A bit of buyer awareness is important when purchasing a sweater that's compatible with your lifestyle. For an active lifestyle, choose sweaters with harder, tighter yarns. Soft, loose yarns tend to stretch easily, making them suitable for more sedentary events. Special decorative trims, such as suede, leather, snakeskin, fur, sequins and beads, may mean that the sweater needs extra-special care. The sweater itself may be durable, but the trim may not. Check the store's return policy before purchasing such a sweater in case the trim creates maintenance problems.

When a sweater needs cleaning, read and follow the care label instructions. Depending on their fiber type, sweaters are susceptible to various problems, including stretching, shrinkage, pulls and pilling. These can occur from improper cleaning or as a result of general wear and tear. Some stretching is part of the normal behavior of a sweater knit. In addition, the softer the knit, the more likely it is to undergo some change of texture during normal wear.

Many sweaters are hand-wash-only. If this is the case, it's usually best to dry the sweater flat. It may be necessary to trace its outline onto a piece of brown or craft paper before cleaning. This outline can be used as a pattern to block the damp sweater back to its original size and shape. If it's safe to tumble-dry the sweater on low heat, the care label will give you this information. Some sweaters can be machine-washed using the gentle cycle. Whether washing by hand or by machine, be sure to use the type of laundry detergent that's recommended for the fiber. If the sweater is labeled "dry clean only," an in-dryer kit may be a convenient solution. These kits are perfect for removing odors, such as stale tobacco, perspiration and light soil. They also work particularly well on sweaters with beads, sequins and other special-care trims. Follow the product label instructions and check for colorfastness before using a stain removal system or cloth. ■

MISCELLANY

Common Sources of Uncommon Stains

When food or coffee spills on clothes, it's no surprise if a stain appears. Other stains seem to have mystery origins, but the culprit may be surprisingly close at hand, observes The Soap and Detergent Association.

Skin preparations, including fade creams, skin creams and acne preparations, generally contain bleaches that may discolor fabrics, so be sure they're completely absorbed into the skin before getting dressed. Hair spray and other hair preparations can also damage color and fibers. Put a towel or cloth around your shoulders to protect the garment before the product is used.

Light-colored or clear beverages may not cause an immediate stain. However, if they contain sugar, over time the stain may turn brown from heat exposure. The solution is to treat the spill by blotting it with cold water. Then clean the garment as soon as possible.

Salts from perspiration can eat away at fabrics, causing holes. Avoid deodorants and/or antiperspirants that contain aluminum chlorides. These can cause fabrics — particularly rayon — to deteriorate or turn yellow. To minimize the damage, clean the garment as soon as possible after wearing.

A Longer Life for Leather

Leather is enjoying unprecedented popularity as a fashion fabric. In fact, designers are incorporating it as a year-round fashion fabric. The broad price range makes it accessible to consumers of all ages. And, new technologies have made caring for leather easier than ever before.

Some everyday care tips will make maintenance easier. For example, wearing a neck scarf will protect the collar area from perspiration, body oils and hair tonics. Storing it in a cool, well-ventilated place will keep it from drying out or attracting mildew. If the garment gets wet, air-dry it away from heat. In addition, The Soap and Detergent Association urges consumers to read and save all the care information that comes with the leather garment.

If leather gets dirty, there are special soaps, sometimes called saddle soap, that can be spread onto the garment and then removed with a moist cloth. Another solution is to look for a professional cleaner who specializes in leather cleaning.

Winter Wardrobe Refreshers

When winter clothes need a quick pick-me-up, new time-saving products are just what the wardrobe doctor ordered, suggests The Soap and Detergent Association.

In-dryer kits are an innovation that save time and money. The products are used in the clothes dryer to freshen a wide variety of dry-clean-only garments. Although difficult stains may still require the services of a dry-cleaning professional, these kits will help remove wrinkles, odors and light stains.

Wrinkle-releasing sprays will do the trick when ironing is not on the agenda. Although safe for most fabrics, it's necessary to read the label. Some products shouldn't be used on fabrics that may water spot.

Fabric refreshers neutralize odors on hard-to-wash fabrics and soft surfaces, such as carpets, upholstery and curtains. They're also handy for wardrobe items, such as canvas shoes and tote bags, as well as bulky winter coats.

Finally, *detergents and fabric softeners with color protectors* can keep whites white and colors bright. The trick is to use the product from the beginning of the garment's lifetime. These products protect color, but won't restore it.

Safe, Post-Holiday Snacking

After holiday vacation, kids will be returning to school. While Mom may see to it that there are plenty of provisions for that school or after-school snack, the responsibility for preparing and handling it often rests with the child or an older sibling.

In addition to washing their hands to prevent colds and the flu this season, kids need to wash their hands before making or eating snacks. They also should use clean utensils, plates and glasses to reduce the risk of foodborne illness, reports The Soap and Detergent Association.

In addition, no matter how good their lunch was, leftover sandwiches and other "refrigerator type" foods are not sources for afternoon munching. Kids should throw them away. Fruits and vegetables should be rinsed thoroughly under running water *before* eating. Cold items, such as milk, lunchmeat, yogurt and hard-cooked eggs, should be returned to the refrigerator as soon as the snack is prepared. Finally, remind kids that if something looks "funny," smells bad or has small spots of mold, it's not safe to eat. ■

Q & A

SDA Answers Your Questions

Q: I want to start the New Year off right. How can I avoid having a cold or the flu this season?

A: This time of year presents plenty of opportunities for viruses to spread. Here are some tips for lowering the chance of infection.

Wash your hands.

It's important to make a habit of washing your hands because colds and flu can spread by coughing, sneezing and touching surfaces, such as doorknobs and telephones. Washing your hands frequently helps you and your family reduce the chance of spreading respiratory infections.

Limit exposure to infected people.

If possible, avoid people who have a cold or the flu. If your kids are ill, in addition to washing your hands frequently, keep surfaces clean with a virus-killing disinfectant cleaner. A solution of 1 part bleach mixed with 10 parts water is also effective for killing viruses.

Practice healthy habits.

Eating a balanced diet, getting enough sleep and exercising can help your immune system better fight off the germs that cause illness.

Drink up.

When you have a cold or flu, fluids such as water, juice, soup and non-caffeinated beverages, can help loosen mucus, keep you hydrated and make you feel better. ■



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



“KEEP IT CLEAN” BRIEFS

Clean As You Go! Ten Resolutions to Make Cleaning Easier in the New Year . . .

1. Make your bed before leaving in the morning. Hang up your coat as soon as you walk in the door. You'll always feel better when you come home to a neat house.
2. Break down big, weekly chores into smaller tasks and tackle them during the week; you'll be left with only a few tasks on the weekend.
3. You can take it with you — put your cleaning products in a lightweight caddy or basket that's easy to tote from room-to-room.
4. Read product labels so you can choose the right cleaner for the soils and surfaces in your home.
5. Clean a room by working from the cleanest area to the dirtiest. It's hard to gear up for cleaning when you tackle the hardest job head on.
6. To keep dishes from piling up throughout the day, put them in the dishwasher right after you eat. Hand wash large pots and pans.
7. When time is short, speed-clean your surfaces using an all-purpose cleaner.
8. Wipe up spills as they occur, discard empty containers and return cooking items to their places when you're through with them.
9. Keep clean sponges handy and wipe the bathroom sink, shower door and vanity after each use.
10. A light, quick dusting is better than no dusting at all. Your home will look presentable at all times. ■

For more information, visit:
www.cleaning101.com