



# CLEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

475 Park Avenue South New York, New York 10016

## SCRUB AWAY YOUR WINTER BLUES A Healthy Dose of Spring Cleaning

On the first warm day of spring, everybody has experienced the desire to welcome the season by saying good-bye to winter's dirt and dust. But did you know that a thorough house cleaning can boost your health as well as your spirits?

According to Dr. Cheryl Walker, an internist specializing in allergy and immunology at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, "Along with beautiful blooming flowers and trees, the spring and summer months can be long and tiring for many of the 50 million allergy sufferers. The symptoms from common allergens, such as dust, mold, mildew, and pollen from ragweed, grass and trees, can be dreadful. One of the easiest ways for allergy sufferers to reduce their symptoms — sneezing, itching, runny nose and watering eyes — is to give their home a thorough cleaning." And while keeping your windows closed will help keep the pollen out, Dr. Walker recommends, "Check to see that your air-conditioning filters are clean because dust mites and mold can grow on them."

There's no time like springtime to tackle a season's worth of dirt and dust. Cleaning household surfaces, washing bedding, dusting and vacuuming can help reduce allergy symptoms, and they'll make your house sparkle too. Just be sure to read and follow directions on cleaning product labels for safe and effective use.

Here are some cleaning tips from The Soap and Detergent Association that can help reduce home allergens throughout the year:

- *Start With the Bedroom:* Launder all washable sheets, mattress covers, pillows and bed skirts, blankets and comforters. Flip your mattresses and vacuum them. Many allergies are triggered by the tiny dust mites in your bedding.

- *Dust, Dust, Dust:* Use a clean, soft cloth sprayed with a dusting product. Dust stereo



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components, dust above and below your television set and remove books from shelves, so you can wipe them down properly.

- *Vacuum Everywhere:* Vacuum under your beds, couch and chairs, behind your dressers, tables, refrigerator, oven, television and stereo. Remove cushions and vacuum underneath. And be sure to do the crevices of upholstery and lamp shades.



SDA





• *Don't Forget The Carpets:* Dirt not only aggravates allergies, it grinds into carpet fibers and weakens them. Vacuum carpets frequently and use a carpet cleaner to remove stains. Moisture promotes the growth of molds and other allergens, so keep carpets as dry as possible.

• *Scrub the Bathroom:* Use a mildew stain remover on your tub and shower walls, and a hard water remover to take care of those crusty hard water mineral deposits.

• *Clean the Fridge:* Old food tends to find its way into the back corners of the refrigerator. Try pulling out everything (store perishable items in a second refrigerator or well-iced cooler while working), and wash shelves and storage bins with a non-abrasive all-purpose cleaner or a solution of baking soda and water.

• *Wash the Floors:* Wash vinyl and ceramic tile floors with a non-abrasive, all-purpose cleaner or a floor cleaner. Use a no-rinse product or rinse the floor well after cleaning. For really dirty floors, you may have to drop the mop and scrub! Use a wood cleaner on your hardwood floors.

• *Hit the Closets:* Pull out your winter clothes and decide which clothes need to be washed or dry cleaned before storing them in cedar (to prevent moths from eating your wool sweater). Consider donating to charity anything you didn't wear in the fall or winter. Don't forget to move your shoes and vacuum the floor.

• *Improve Your Vision:* Spring is the perfect time to wash windows and screens. Use a glass cleaner or glass and multi-surface cleaner for non-streaking window cleaning. While screens let the fresh air in, they also collect a lot of dirt. Remove the screens from their tracks and line them up outside. Gently scrub them with a brush dipped in a solution of all-purpose cleaner and water. Hose them down and watch the dirt wash away. Guaranteed 20/20 vision and better breathing. ■

## HOOKED ON RUGS Accent Rugs Make News

In the rug industry, an accent rug is generally defined as any rug that measures 4' x 6' or under. These rugs are popular all through the house, from bathroom to entryway, on bare floors or over carpet, notes The Soap and Detergent Association.

Area rugs are basically categorized two ways. Textile rugs, have a cotton or nylon face fiber and a rubberized backing. They are usually washable and traditionally coordinate with bed and bath fashions. More and more frequently, these rugs are designed to stand on their own in any room of the house. And, regardless of whether the fibers are natural or synthetic, the best selling rugs look like natural materials: cotton, linen or wool.

Conventional accent rugs look like mini versions of room-size or area rugs. Single image designs dominate the market. Domestic versions are usually machine-made polypropylene or tufted and needlepunched nylon. Imported versions are often hand-woven or hand-hooked wool.

Some accent rugs have distinctly American roots. Braided rugs, developed in Colonial times, were created by braiding strips of recycled textiles, then sewing or lacing them together. Hooked rugs have a looped surface that is created by drawing fabric strips through a coarse foundation. Today, many hooked rugs are imported from China. Rag rugs are made by sewing together strips of cotton, wool or linen cloth. These rugs are still made by hand in Appalachia. Navajo rugs are hand woven floor coverings created by members of the Navajo Nation, the largest Native American tribe. Traditionally, they have simple striped patterns in soft, natural colors.

Many, but not all, accent rugs can be laundered. Always read and follow care instructions that come with the rug to assure its proper care and long life.

Most of these rugs require a good underlay to help keep them flat and prevent slippage. Underlays also provide sound absorption and extend the life of the rug. Choice of underlay depends on the surface underneath the rug. If the floor is smooth, the underlay should have an open-weave or slab construction. If the rug rests on a carpet, the underlay usually consists of polyester felt treated with a pressure-sensitive adhesive. ■

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



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### Featured on the Program:

**A Look To The Future:** A discussion of consumer trends that affect environmental issues, cleaning products and community outreach programs.

**Formulating Cleaning Products:** Hear from the experts about what goes into formulating cleaning products — with human and environmental safety in mind.

**Using and Disposing of Cleaning Products:** Discover strategies for safe and effective product and package use, waste reduction and disposal.

**Community Outreach:** A look at innovative community education programs that work!

**Product Update:** Hear about the newest developments in hard surface cleaners, laundry, dishwashing and personal care products, including package innovations. Learn about issues that impact product innovation, such as antimicrobial products and energy efficient washing machines and dishwashers.

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Nov/Dec 1996 - Jan/Feb 1997 - March/April 1997

## CONQUERING THE MIGHTY DUST MITE Floor-care Products Join the Battle

According to vacuum manufacturers' estimates, one-third to one-half of all American households include an asthmatic or allergy-prone member. This adds up to a lot of people who have good reason to be wary of household dust. House dust may appear benevolent, but it actually contains chemicals from exhaust, lead and other sources — elements that can affect indoor air quality. Manufacturers are addressing this problem with a host of allergen-control floor care products, reports The Soap and Detergent Association.

Micro filtration bags, which increase a vacuum's ability to capture particles as small as one micron (0.001 of an inch) have been on the market since 1991. Chemically treated bags and bags designed to prevent dust leakage during changing are more recent innovations. At least one manufacturer offers a vacuum marketed as hypo-allergenic because, according to the manufacturer's claims, it removes 99.7% of particles as small as one micron. Another offers electrostatically charged filtration systems that charge dust particles as they are sucked through the machine, resulting in better dust retention. Others contain multi-stage filtration systems, some with an electrostatically charged final filter, but all designed to better retain incoming dust. HEAP (High Efficiency Particulate Air) technology, the same technology usually found on air cleaners, allows a vacuum to capture 99.97% of particles down to 0.3 microns.

Industry experts predict that filtration systems will become standard features on high-end vacuums, in much the same way as on-board tools. Even so, these same experts also agree that consumers are far more interested in cleaning effectiveness, power, convenience and product durability. Although indoor air quality is a growing concern for many people, filtration is a secondary issue, except for those consumers with asthma, specific allergies or similar health concerns. It drives up the initial cost of the vacuum. In addition, replacement Micro filtration bags cost about twice as much as standard one-ply bags. ■

## VACUUMING WITH VIGOR Guidelines for Great Results

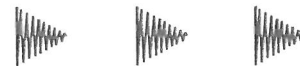
When it comes to vacuuming, it's almost safe to say that too much is never enough! Frequent vacuuming will not harm carpets and furnishings, but if ground-in soil is not removed, it can dull, discolor and damage these textiles. The Soap and Detergent Association offers some guidelines for getting the most out of vacuuming efforts.

Keep in mind that an excessively soiled carpet can hold up to one pound of dirt in each square yard. That's a lot of dirt to create a lot of damage. If the choice is between a light vacuuming all over the room or a thorough vacuuming in heavily trafficked areas, choose the latter. Most of the damaging soils, oily or gritty particles collect where there is the most foot traffic. In a residential setting, heavily trafficked areas should be vacuumed once or twice a week. For areas that receive little traffic, once every two weeks may suffice. In the commercial setting, carpets should be vacuumed thoroughly at least three to five times per week. In high traffic areas, the carpet should be vacuumed nightly.

To remove soil and improve the carpet's appearance, vacuum against the nap. Six or even eight strokes over the same area constitutes a heavy vacuuming. Three or four overlapping strokes equals a light vacuuming.

Vigilant maintenance will affect the vacuum cleaner's performance. Never let the dirt collection bag become more than half full. Otherwise, the suction power will be reduced and the vacuum will operate less efficiently. Cloth dirt collection bags should be turned inside out and brushed off at least every third emptying.

An upright vacuum with a beater bar is the best choice for a carpet. Adjust the bar's height to match the pile height of the carpet. Carpets that have a high pile or are loosely textured may show shading marks that identify the vacuum's last pass. To create an even surface appearance, keep the final vacuuming strokes all in the same direction. A canister-style vacuum is preferable for upholstery, draperies, blinds and light dusting. ■





## MISCELLANY

### Sneezing's Not Just For Summer

While many people consider allergies a warm weather nuisance, winter is prime time suffering season, too, warns The Soap and Detergent Association. Culprits that spawn indoor allergies include dust mites that thrive in mattresses, pillows and carpeting, mold that's found in humidifiers and dander from pets that winter indoors.

To reduce indoor allergies, homes should be well ventilated. Whenever possible, open windows to provide fresh air. Vacuum rugs and upholstered furniture regularly. Shampoo them occasionally. To remove the most common irritant to humans — the allergen that coats the fur— bathe pets, especially cats, regularly.

To control dust mites, use zip-on plastic or rubber covers for mattresses and pillows. For comfort, choose covers with terry cloth on one side. Wash bedclothes in hot water and avoid down pillows and comforters.

### Home Health Care Products Lure Consumers

Manufacturers of home health care products are revamping existing products and developing new ones designed to appeal directly to the consumer. Brighter colors and more consumer-oriented packaging enhance their gift appeal. New superstores, hybrids between traditional medical supply stores and mass merchants, are making these products more accessible to the general public.

Home diagnostic products sighted by The Soap and Detergent Association include a digital pacifier thermometer with the sensor in the nipple and a blood glucose monitor with touchable test strips. Designed for diabetics, the monitor is smaller and has a quicker response time than previous models.

Other product innovations include air-cushioned seating devices meant to build back muscles and improve posture, polyurethane back massagers in cheerful colors and a sound conditioner to help lull infants to sleep. It has six different sounds, including fetal and maternal heartbeats, lullabies, running water, rain and surf.

### Dishing Out the News

Dishwashers may come with an assortment of bells and whistles, but the consumer's priority remains the same: high performance cleaning. This means thorough and efficient washing and drying. Prewash cycles have become a less important selling feature as people have come to value their time more, observes The Soap and Detergent Association.

Convenience is another important factor. With changing lifestyles, everyone in the home, from children to the elderly, run the dishwasher. Consumers want controls that are easy to see and operate and an inside that is easy to load. Increased capacity, folding and movable racks, additional clips and redesigned baskets can all help alleviate loading problems. Although quiet operation may not be touted as a competitive feature among some manufacturers, it is still important to the consumer. In upscale models, plastic tubs are being replaced with durable, but more expensive, stainless steel interiors.

### Curl Care

Consumers who want to change their hairstyles at a flick of the wrist are getting lots of help from hair care appliance manufacturers, observes The Soap and Detergent Association.

Curls come easy with rollers that change color when fully heated, then change back again when cool and ready to be taken out of the hair. Color change technology also alerts curling iron users when the appliance has reached optimum temperature.

Hair dryers are designed to do more than dry the hair. One version encourages waves, full curls and adds body. Another sports a combed tip designed to straighten hair rather than add volume. And butane-powered styling brushes provide the wherewithal to alter a hairstyle anywhere, anytime. ■

## Q &amp; A

## SDA Answers Your Questions

**Q: I like to pretreat the stains on my clothes, but am confused about the different types of pretreat products. Can you help me sort this out?**

A: You are correct to pretreat stains, as this simple procedure will help assure that stains get removed in the first washing. There are three types of pretreat products: liquids and aerosols, sticks, and gels. Liquid and aerosol pretreaters do their best work while they're still wet. Pretreat the stain and wash the garment within a few minutes after the product is applied. Leaving these products on longer than recommended on the product label may cause color loss or change if the fabric dyes are unstable.

Stick pretreaters do their work dry and should be left on the stain for three or four days before washing.

Gel pretreaters should be applied as soon as possible to help prevent stains from setting. They can be applied up to a week before washing. One exception to this time period is when using them on bright or fluorescent colors. Do not pretreat these colored garments more than a few minutes before washing as they are susceptible to color loss.

The Soap and Detergent Association has some other tips about pretreating stains. If you are uncertain about the stability of the garment dyes, pretest the garment in an inconspicuous area. Apply the pretreat, then rinse out the product and note if there was any color change. If not, the pretreat is safe to use.

Over time, soil can build up on some fabrics, especially polyesters. When a pretreat product is used, the pretreated area is actually supercleaned and may resemble a bleached spot. This can usually be corrected by treating the entire garment with a prespotter or presoak and rewashing with extra detergent. ■

## WHAT'S NEW?

Small area rugs layered on top of wall-to-wall carpets add dimension and beauty to a room. Rug-Hold Magic is a treated polyester with peel-and-stick backing on both sides. When applied to the area rug, it holds the rug flat and in place. And, because it is treated with DuPont Teflon Carpet Protector, it prevents the transfer of stains, dyes and moisture from rug to carpet pile. (DuPont Co.; 1007 Market Street; Wilmington, DE 19898)

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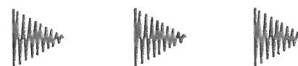
When the automobile functions as a portable office, keeping everything organized can be a problem. Creative solutions include The Office Manager, a heavy-duty polypropylene hanging file storage container. The Office Manager Plus offers file storage, plus a hanging organizer that holds pens, staplers and other office supplies. Both feature a detachable lid and a hole for locking. (Igloo Products Corp.; 1001 W. Sam Houston Pkwy. N.; P.O.Box 19322; Houston, TX 77043)

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Rest easy with the SleepSafe Bedside Security System. It includes an alarm clock and a switch to lights on and off from the bed. If an intruder appears, it sounds an alarm and automatically turns on the lights. The Sentinel Motion Detector, designed for travel or apartment/dormitory living, includes an alarm clock, an anti-intruder alarm and a small light for night reading. Made by Westclox, both products are available at mass merchants.

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Complete plans for the Ultimate Laundry Room feature a room that houses a laundry sorting center, detergent bins, wall-mounted drying rack, plus space for washer and dryer. It also includes a workbench/home office area, gift wrap and craft center, dry sink/potting area, herb/flower drying rack, recycling center and special kitty litter box. The plans, including photographs, materials lists and step-by-step instructions, are \$24.95. (Better Homes & Gardens Reader Shopping; Dept. 9507; Box 9128; Des Moines, IA 50306-9128) ■



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**Cleaning Products...  
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# LOOK INSIDE

for exciting information  
about an event you  
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