

Cleaning Matters®

Tips and Trends from The Soap and Detergent Association

September/October 2009

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Calendar of Clean

September is ...

- **Labor Day: Sep. 7**
- **First Day of Fall: Sep. 22**
See *Putting Germs in their Place* article
- **International Clean Hands Week: Sep. 20–26**
See *Clean Hands*, *Computer Cleaning* and *Ask Nancy!* articles

October is ...

- **National Child Health Day: Oct. 5**
See *Clean Ideas* article
- **Global Handwashing Day: Oct. 15**
See *Clean Hands* and *Ask Nancy!* articles
- **Halloween: Oct. 31**
- **National Breast Cancer Awareness Month**
See *Sustainability Matters* article
- **Children's Health Month**
See *Clean Ideas* article
- **Energy Awareness Month**
See *Energy Economy* article

Clean Hands for Better Health

Going global with the benefits of clean hands

If ever there was a time to recognize the importance of the connection between handwashing and good health, the time is now! Each year, influenza kills more than 36,000 people and hospitalizes 200,000 in the United States. Worldwide, the annual epidemics cause about 250,000 to 500,000 deaths. Now, with the new challenge of the H1N1 virus, hand hygiene plays an even more vital role in public health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that influenza illness, including illness associated with the influenza A (H1N1) virus, is ongoing in this country. This virus is not “going away,” as some people seem to think.

When this virus first surfaced, it was referred to as “swine flu.” However, last April, after a number of countries banned pork imports or slaughtered their pigs, the World Health Organization (WHO) began referring to it as influenza A (H1N1) virus. On June 11, 2009, the WHO raised the worldwide pandemic alert level to Phase 6 in response to the ongoing global spread of this virus. A Phase 6 designation indicates that a global pandemic is underway.

Routine hygiene practices, such as washing your hands, are everyday actions people can take to stay healthy. To learn more and keep up-to-date with credible information, visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>.

more



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Clean Hands for Better Health (cont.)

Proper Handwashing Procedures

To do the job properly, you need three things: soap, warm running water, and enough time (20 seconds – or about how long it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” two times).

1. Wet hands with warm, running water. Then apply soap.
2. Rub hands together vigorously to make lather and scrub all surfaces. Continue for 20 seconds.
3. Rinse well under warm, running water.
4. Dry hands thoroughly using paper towels or an air dryer. If possible, use paper towels to turn off the faucet.

“When soap and water aren’t available, there are other alternatives,” says Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association. “Hand sanitizers and handwipes are easy, convenient and portable.”

Clean-Hands Initiatives

Putting the spotlight on the importance of handwashing for good health is the driving force behind several major initiatives.

International Clean Hands Week – September 20–26, 2009: The Soap and Detergent Association is one of 13 organizations that have joined forces to create The Clean Hands Coalition (CHC). The CHC is facilitated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and works to increase global awareness of the importance of handwashing in disease prevention. To learn more about this network, visit www.cleanhandscoalition.org.

FREE Webinar – September 24, 2009 at 6 PM: Join SDA as we present a hand-hygiene education webinar for family and consumer science professionals, health educators, nurses, teachers and others interested in getting ready for the cold and flu season. The Webinar will provide you with

information that is ready to share with community leaders and will involve experts from The Soap and Detergent Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Society of Microbiology. This webinar will create a network of people that can provide leadership in public health nationwide.

To register, email info@cleaning101.com or visit www.cleaning101.com/handhygiene.

Global Handwashing Day – October 15, 2009:

This event, first introduced in 2008, was the centerpiece of a year that the United Nations General Assembly designated as the International Year of Sanitation. The driving theme for Global Handwashing Day is children and schools. This global celebration’s main objectives are to foster and support a global and local culture of handwashing with soap, to shine a spotlight on the state of handwashing in each country, and to raise awareness about the benefits of handwashing with soap.

For more information about Global Handwashing Day, and to download the Planner’s Guide, visit www.globalhandwashingday.org.

It’s a SNAP: 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 was created by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and The Soap and Detergent Association.

To learn about the 2009 SNAP Award recipients, visit www.itsasnapp.org. Interested educators can also learn more about the 2010 SNAP program and download program-ready materials from this website. Follow us on Twitter (www.twitter.com/itsasnapporg) for regular updates, ideas and links to hand hygiene resources.

News Flash

Embracing Sustainability

Cleaning products focus on new developments to protect future generations

The Soap and Detergent Association's Principles for Sustainable Development were at the heart of a keynote presentation given at the annual conference of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS). "Protecting Future Generations – Embracing Sustainability" offered insights on the tsunami of consumer information on sustainability, definitions, science-based advocacy efforts, product innovations and ingredient communication. The presentation highlighted the need for science over sensationalism and encouraged consumer educators to be cautious about mix-at-home cleaners. Also covered was what consumers might see in future product performance, convenience, packaging and labeling. The presenters discussed how the cleaning product industry, families and consumer science educators can work in harmony to sustain the planet.

The presentation highlighted both the efforts of individual manufacturers, such as packaging made from 100% recycled newspaper (which is also imbedded with seeds so the empty carton can be planted to grow Baby's Breath,) and joint programs, such as the Consumer Product Ingredient Communication Initiative. The latter is a proactive, voluntary initiative aimed at meeting the changing

needs of consumers and the marketplace by creating a uniform system for providing ingredient information to consumers in a meaningful and easy-to-understand way. It's scheduled to take effect in January 2010 and a new fact sheet for consumers will be available soon for consumer audiences. For more information about this initiative, visit http://cleaning101.com/files/Consumer_Product_Ingredient_Communication_Initiative_description_11-24-08.pdf.

"Protecting Future Generations – Embracing Sustainability" also discussed other initiatives, such as the Cleaning For A Reason Foundation, which provides free residential cleaning for women undergoing treatment for cancer, the AAFCS Clean Project, an outreach effort for flood victims in Iowa, and *Cleaning Matters*®, SDA's award-winning newsletter.

The presentation, in PowerPoint® format, can be downloaded by visiting SDA's Sustainability Central website, www.cleaning101.com/sustainability. Please tell SDA how you used this presentation by sending a note to Nancy Bock at nbock@cleaning101.com. We would like to share your sustainability successes in future issues of the *Cleaning Matters*® newsletter!

News Flash

Clean Homes ... Healthy Families Award *Recognizing NEAFCS members for innovative educational programs*

The Soap and Detergent Association is proud to honor the National Extension Association for Family & Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) Clean Homes ... Healthy Families Award recipients for their innovative educational programs that link clean homes and good health at the 2009 NEAFCS Conference in Birmingham, Alabama, September 15–18. Award recipients will receive a \$500 cash award.

Congratulations to the following award recipients:

Joy Anne Borgman, Extension Faculty for the University of Florida. Honored for her snapshot of food safety, operations and leadership training necessary for adult and youth volunteers who provide food for 5,000 people at a ten-day county fair.

Gale A. Mills, Family and Consumer Sciences Educator for Oklahoma State University Extension, Dewey, Oklahoma. Honored for helping 363 elementary students in Bartlesville, Oklahoma learn the importance of hand hygiene on a closed-circuit television during Healthy Choices week.

The award recipients will share more about their programs in the next issue of *Cleaning Matters*®. For more information about this and other awards available through The Soap and Detergent Association, visit SDA's Awards page at www.cleaning101.com/awards.

SDA Moved!

On August 1, The Soap and Detergent Association moved to a new address:

1331 L Street NW, Suite 650
Washington, D.C. 20005

SDA's new location, which is still in the heart of Washington, D.C., is one of DC's first office buildings designed for Gold LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Certification. Learn more about the U.S. Green Building Council at www.usgbc.org

SDA's main phone number is still the same:
(202) 347-2900.

Putting Germs in their Place

Strategies for keeping germs at bay during the cold and flu season

Experts agree that frequent handwashing is one of the first lines of defense against colds and flu.

But no matter how many times you wash your hands, there are always some sneaky little germs lurking around to hitch a ride on your skin. They loiter on shopping cart handles, linger on light switches, lurk about the phone and even hang around on the remote controls.

The length of time that cold or flu germs can survive outside the body on these or other surfaces varies greatly. But the suspected range is from a few seconds to 48 hours – depending on the specific virus and the type of surface. Flu viruses tend to live longer on surfaces than cold viruses do. And it's suspected that cold and flu viruses live longer on nonporous surfaces, such as plastic, metal or wood, than they do on porous surfaces, such as fabrics, skin or paper.

When killing surface germs is your goal, look for products that contain a disinfectant. Some of the more frequently used active ingredients are sodium hypochlorite, ethanol, pine oil, hydrogen peroxide, citric acid and quats (quaternary ammonium compounds).

Products that say “Disinfectant” on the label are required to meet government specifications. To be sure the product has met all government requirements for effectiveness, look for an EPA Registration Number on the label. You must follow the product label instructions exactly for the disinfectant to be effective. Your choices include:

- **Chlorine bleach.** It disinfects when mixed and used properly. Read the label for instructions.
 - **Disinfectant cleaners.** These dual purpose products contain ingredients that help remove soil as well as kill germs.
 - **Disinfectants.** These products are designed to be effective against the germs indicated on their labels. Surfaces should be clean prior to disinfecting.
- ### Be vigilant
- While you can't control every germ in your environment, it makes good sense to defend against the germs that can make you sick. Be particularly vigilant during the fall and winter months, when colds and flu are at their peak. And even if you think you're savvy about germ control, Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, has identified a few “hot spots” you may have overlooked:
- **If you take small children to the supermarket,** use an antibacterial wipe on the cart handle before settling the child down in the cart.
 - **Be aware of what you do with your hands.** Even the unconscious act of rubbing your eyes can transfer germs from your hands into your system. Small children are notorious for putting germ-laden hands in their mouth, eyes and nose. But, while adults should know better, that isn't always the case.
 - **If communal snacks are part of your office culture,** two things should be constant on the snack table: handwipes and bakery tissue paper. The former will remind people to clean their hands before dipping into the donut box; the latter, which are available from restaurant supply houses, will help insure that those hands, clean or dirty, don't touch other people's food.
 - **Steer clear of germs.** When you get back in your car after being out and about, clean your hands with a handwipe or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Then use an antibacterial wipe to clean your steering wheel.
 - **If someone in your household has a cold or the flu,** position antibacterial wipes in strategic places around the home and encourage everyone to use them frequently on common-touch surfaces, like the television remote, faucet handles, doorknobs and light switches.

Sustainability Matters

Cleaning for a reason

October 2009 marks the 25th anniversary of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The organization behind the designation is a partnership of national public service organizations, professional medical associations and government agencies working together to promote breast cancer awareness, share information on the disease and provide greater access to screening services.

Many cancer patients face challenges when their immune system is under attack.

The Soap and Detergent Association is a proud supporter of the Cleaning For A Reason Foundation, the Lewisville, Texas-based organization which offers professional housecleaning services once a month for four months to women undergoing treatment for cancer – at no cost.

“Having a clean home when you have cancer is a relief to my patients,” said Dr. Kandace Farmer, a practitioner at Solis Women’s Health, a breast care center in Denton, Texas. Dr. Farmer is a member of the Foundation’s board of directors.

“Cleaning For A Reason provides peace of mind to women undergoing treatment for cancer so that they can concentrate on their health. Ensuring that patients have a clean environment when immune systems are compromised is a true gift that our partners are providing in 44 states,” said Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association.

To support the work of the Cleaning For A Reason Foundation, visit their website at www.cleaningforareason.org.

For more information about National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, visit their website at www.nbcam.org.

Energy Economy

Ways to give your appliances an energy boost

Because appliances are a major source of energy use, it's important to do all you can to keep them running as efficiently as possible. Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, has gathered some tips to help you conserve energy, which is not only good for the environment but also good for your pocketbook.

Dishwasher: The biggest energy drain comes from heating the water – and it takes just as much water to clean a partial load of dishes as a full one. So wait until the dishwasher is full and then run it. During the winter months, when the air in the house is generally dry, you can further reduce energy use by eliminating the dry cycle. Instead, when the dishwasher stops, open it and pull out both racks. Everything will be dry in about an hour. One side effect of this procedure may be spotting on your glassware. If this occurs, using a rinse agent will allow the water to sheet off the dishes rather than dry in droplets.

Hot-water heater: Lower the thermostat so the water never gets hotter than 120 degrees. Besides saving energy, this will prevent scalding injuries.

Washing machine: Small loads may use less water, but they consume almost as much energy as large loads. So, think before you load! If possible, wait until you have a full load before running the washing machine. For optimum cleaning, follow the laundry

detergent manufacturer's recommendations for the proper amount of detergent. And if you own an HE washer, be sure you're using a detergent that's specially formulated for your machine.

Clothes dryer: Cleaning the lint trap before each load will help avoid a fire hazard and make your clothes dry faster, which saves energy.

Refrigerator: Keep the door seals and their contact surfaces clean. This will reduce energy consumption and extend the life of the seal. Before cleaning, turn off the temperature controls and, if possible, unplug the unit. Clean the seals and corresponding surfaces with a solution of one part chlorine bleach to one part warm water. Use an old toothbrush to get into the crevices in the seal. Wipe the solution off with a clean, damp cloth and then dry with a second clean cloth or paper towel. A yearly vacuuming underneath and behind the unit will also help it run more efficiently. Unplug the refrigerator and then use a crevice tool or a feather duster to clean the coil and all the metal parts.

Freezer: If you don't own the frost-free variety, defrost whenever there's more than a 1/4 inch of buildup. Be sure to unplug the unit before you begin. Once the frost is gone, clean the inside of the freezer with a solution of warm water and liquid dish detergent. Rinse with fresh water and wipe dry.

Computer Cleaning

Hotspots for germs in the office

Think about all the “public” surfaces you touch on your way to work – railings, door handles, coins and tokens, cash machines, elevator buttons and more. Then, when you get to your destination, washing your hands probably isn’t the first thing you do. Instead, you probably grab a cup of coffee and turn on your computer. If you power up before you clean up, all the germs and bacteria that commuted with you are transferred from your hands to your workstation. Ugh! And then, if someone else sits down at your computer, you’ve got all the germs that tagged along with them, too.

Before you begin, Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at The Soap and Detergent Association, cautions you to remember the two golden rules of computer cleaning:

Be sure the computer is off before you clean any part of it – keyboard, monitor screen, mouse, printer or housings.

Never spray cleaner directly onto any part of the computer. Spray it onto a cloth, and then gently wipe.

Keyboard: Clean the keys with a cleaning wipe or a cloth sprayed with an all-purpose cleaner. Make this the first thing you do every morning before you turn on the computer. To remove the dirt, dust and

other debris that gets caught between the keys, turn it upside down and shake gently to dislodge the particles. An air duster is also a great aid in removing all these bits and pieces that get lodged inside the keyboard.

Mouse: It’s also a good idea to clean the mouse before the start of the workday. Use a cleaning wipe or a cloth sprayed with an all-purpose cleaner.

Monitor: Use a microfiber cloth, either dry or dampened with clean water, or a product specially formulated for computer screens. If you use anything else, you run the risk of damaging the screen. Clean the monitor several times a week, as a dirty monitor can cause eyestrain.

Surrounding surfaces (including computer housings and desktops): Since there are probably coffee and food stains lurking amidst the dust, use an all-purpose cleaner with a disinfectant.

Printer: Consider how often you push the button on the printer and how seldom you think about cleaning it!

Telephone: Even if you’re the only one using it, it’s still transmission central for germs and bacteria that cause ear, nose and eye infections. Clean it daily using a hard-surface disinfectant cleaner or a wipe.

Cleaning Questions? *Ask Nancy!*

Q: I sometimes get dry and cracked skin from using soap. I believe it's because I'm allergic to sulfa and sulfonates. First, I would like to know what purpose sulfonates have in soaps. Second, I would like to know how "hypoallergenic" soaps work. Third, what soap would you recommend for someone who has allergies?

A: Sulfonates are added to some soaps to prevent scum from forming in situations where hard water is present. They also increase cleaning efficiency by lowering the surface tension of the water, emulsifying grease and absorbing dirt into the foam. Products termed "hypoallergenic" are ones that manufacturers claim produce fewer allergic reactions than other products. Because it's a marketing term, not a scientific definition, you may have to do some experimenting to discover which hypoallergenic soaps work best for you.

Overuse of any cleansing product could irritate and cause dry and cracked skin. Moisturizers can help with irritation. Many people with your problem find that using hand cream regularly (three or more times per day) brings them relief. Unfortunately, moisturizers would provide little help with

allergens if you were truly allergic. Do not speculate on what may be causing a problem. Consult with your medical professional to determine if you have allergies. Once you know what causes your problems, look at the ingredients listed on the label to avoid these.

Tell Nancy Your Handwashing Stories!

For almost 40 years, SDA's *Cleaning Matters*® newsletter has included a question-and-answer section. We're excited to announce that we'll be turning the table, and letting our readers *Tell Nancy* about topics related to cleaning!

Have you done something special to encourage your family, coworkers, students or friends to wash their hands regularly? Has your school, organization or workplace developed a program to promote the benefits of clean hands? Have you spotted signs in restrooms or other public places that get the hand-hygiene message out in a unique and/or humorous way? Let us hear from you! Send Nancy an email at info@cleaning101.com and write "handwashing story" in the subject line. Your story could appear in a future issue of our newsletter in the new *Tell Nancy* feature!

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

Clean Ideas

Protecting Children from Environmental Risks

Ways to teach clean and healthy habits that benefit children and the environment

October is Children's Health Month. This initiative, sponsored by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, is designed to highlight the importance of protecting children from environmental risks. Here are a few suggestions for ways to help children incorporate clean and healthy habits into their daily lives.

- **Walk more.** October 8 is International Walk to School Day. The goal of the day is to encourage fitness and reduce traffic and air pollution by encouraging walking, biking, carpooling or riding school buses to get to school safely. If need be, rearrange morning habits to make this happen. If it isn't possible, use the day as a starting point to walk more places as a family.
- **Get screened.** Sunscreen isn't just for summer months. Those damaging rays that can cause skin cancer later in life are there all year long. If you think about it, many of us are outdoors more in the fall, when the weather is cooler, than in the summer. And if winter sports are on the agenda, the rays that reflect off the snow can be brutal to one's skin. Choose a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher. According to the American Academy of Dermatology, even on a cloudy day, up to 80 percent of the sun's ultraviolet rays can pass through the clouds. In addition, sand reflects 25 percent of the sun's rays and snow reflects 80 percent of the sun's rays.
- **Promote food safety.** Get your children involved in meal preparation. As you do, teach them the importance of clean hands, which means washing hands with soap and warm water and scrubbing for at least 20 seconds. This should be done before starting meal preparation and after handling raw meat, fish or poultry. For more information on cleaning tips for food safety, visit www.cleaning101.com/health/foodsafety.
- **Consider composting.** Fall is a great time to add a compost pile to your children's concept of recycling. It'll cut down on the amount of garbage your household generates and the results will enrich your garden. There are many ways to create a compost pile, some more complicated than others. One of the easiest ways is to purchase a closed composting bin and follow the directions that come with it. Often, it's impractical to run out and immediately dump every suitable kitchen scrap into the pile. Keep a covered container in the kitchen to store scraps until you have time to take it to the pile. Place the container under the sink or near the back door. Then, before you refill the container, clean it with a household cleaning product that contains a disinfectant.
- **Support school custodial efforts.** The National C.L.E.A.N.® Awards Program recognizes five school custodians or custodial teams that make outstanding contributions to public health in their schools, communities and their professions. This is a joint initiative of The Soap and Detergent Association, National Education Association, National Education Association Health Information Network, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The 2009 top recipient was Pat Nicholson, head custodian at the Brownsville Elementary School in Brownsville, Washington. His "cleaning for health" program draws on sound information and a sense of humor to inspire and educate students and staff. He even went so far as to personalize his floor scrubber, painting it to resemble a saber-toothed tiger that has been affectionately named "Fang." Using images captured from the Internet, the kids have inserted Fang into photos from around the world. To learn more about Pat's efforts and to meet Fang, visit www.washingtonea.org/static_content/video/09/clean/frame.html. Talk to your school about how students and parents can help the custodians clean for health and encourage them to apply for the 2010 awards!