

HealthyCleaning101 Presents:

SAFE CLEANING CHEAT SHEET – SOIL AND STAIN REMOVERS

SAFETY FIRST! Always read and follow the label on any product you use. Other notes for laundry products:

- Always store laundry products out of sight and out of reach of children
- Keep all products in their original containers with the original labels visible
- Don't mix laundry products or any other cleaning products, as these can produce dangerous gases
- Keep a copy of your local Poison Control Centre handy – you can find yours here: www.capcc.ca

Labels, labels, everywhere...

The **label on the garment** and the **label on the laundry product** both have important information that will tell you how to clean the garment most effectively!



- The **product label** will tell you how to use it properly, as well as what kinds of fabrics it can and cannot be used on.
- The **garment care label** will tell you the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning it. These labels often include laundry symbols, such as above

If you want to know what the different symbols mean, check this [Guide to Apparel and Textile Care Symbols](#).

Important tip! Before you use a new product or wash a new garment, do a colourfast test. Colourfast means the fabric colour won't fade or run when it's washed. Put a little stain remover on a non-visible part of the garment, like an inside seam, and wash it off after about 5-10 minutes to make sure the colour holds up.

What type of product should I use?

Soil and stain removers come in different forms and serve different purposes based on your needs and the needs of the garment.

- A **pre-wash stain remover** is a full-strength treatment that's applied directly to the garment before you add it to the wash cycle
- An **in-wash stain remover** is added along with other detergents in the wash cycle; it's designed to supplement your regular detergent. Some of these stain removers can also be directly applied to your garment before the regular wash cycle!

Pre-Wash (♣) and In-Wash (♦) Stain Removers

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liquids – quick and easy to apply directly to stain or add to wash load ♣ ♦ • Sprays – easily controls the amount of product being applied to the stain ♣ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sticks – easy and convenient for on-the-go stains ♣ • Soap bars – portable and lightweight; treats stains on contact ♣ • Gels – thick product that stays where it's put ♣ |
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Ingredients to look for

The following are common ingredients that you might find on the product label of your stain remover:

- **Surfactants/Cleaning Agents** – Improve the wetting ability of water, loosen and remove soil with the aid of wash action, then emulsify, solubilize, or suspend soils in wash solution until soils are rinsed away.
- **Enzymes** – Protease enzymes aid in breaking down complex protein stains and soils, such as grass and blood, so these stains and soils can be more easily removed by other detergent ingredients.
- **Sodium Carbonate** – Provides alkalinity, which aids in cleaning and softens water.
- **Oxygen bleach** – A type of bleach that maintains color and whiteness and can be used with all fabrics.
- **Stabilizers** – Maintain high sudsing function, where suds level is an important indicator of cleaning power. They also help maintain stability of the product and its shelf life especially the enzymes and oxygen bleach.
- **Preservatives** – Substance used to protect against natural effects of product aging, e.g., decay, discoloration, oxidation, and bacterial attack. They also protect color and fragrance.
- **Fragrances** – Provide pleasant scents to fabrics.
- **Solvents** – Prevent separation or deterioration of ingredients in liquid products. They also dissolve organic soils and clean without leaving residue.

Have more questions?

Q: What's the most effective way to remove stains?

A: Always treat and wash stains promptly. The longer stains sit on a fabric, the more difficult they may be to remove. Here's more about removing stains:

- **Pre-treat stains.** This means treating and sometimes completely removing spots and stains before laundering. Some common methods are:
 - Using a prewash soil and stain remover
 - Applying and rubbing in:
 - A liquid detergent or
 - A paste of water and granular detergent
- **Prewash stains.** This takes less time than soaking and is useful for garments with heavy or greasy soil that might not come out in a single, regular washing. Some washers have a prewash cycle. A detergent should be used in a prewash. Follow with a regular wash using detergent according to label directions.
- **Soak stains.** Whether it's done in a basin, laundry sink, or washer, this can effectively loosen heavy soils. A detergent should be mixed in water or added to wash cycle before the clothes. Follow label directions for the detergent. Generally, they call for a 30-minute or longer soaking period in warm or cool water.
- **Use an in-wash stain remover during the wash cycle.** It works with your regular detergent to lift stains faster and efficiently.

Q: If I use more stain remover product, will it be more effective at removing stains?

A: Adding more stain remover than recommended doesn't necessarily generate better performance. Follow the directions on the product label to help determine the appropriate amount of product to use.

Q: Will stain removers work as well on older, set-in stains?

A: Stains that are older and set in may require more than one application. Some set-in stains may be impossible to remove.

Q: How can I prevent a stain from becoming permanent or impossible to remove?

A: Treat and wash stains promptly. Always check to make sure that stains have disappeared when removing items from the washer and before drying or ironing clothes.

Q: Should I use a laundry stain remover on my carpet?

A: Only if the label says you can. For best results, read the product label to determine its proper use.

Q: If I have a question about a particular stain remover, who should I contact?

A: Always contact the manufacturer. Most labels contain a toll-free phone number or Web site.