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Tackling Your Laundry: Let's talk safety and tips for success!

Welcome to the ever changing world of laundry detergents, stain removal products, fabric softeners and dryer sheets. Some of today's choices can become overwhelming. Whatever the product choice, the information in this publication should help you keep your laundry room safe.

Creating a safe laundry room

Following some quick and easy steps will make doing laundry safer for your entire household. Some key points to remember include:

- Read and follow product instructions.
- Pay close attention to "Caution," "Warning," "Danger" or "Poison" statements.
- Keep products in their original containers with the label intact.
- Never combine laundry detergents with other cleaning products.
- Keep laundry products out of the reach of children and pets.
- Always close the laundry detergent container, box, bottle or pouch immediately after use.
- Wash your hands and any items used to dispense or measure laundry products after each use.
- Choose to do laundry at a time when you can give it your full attention, with no distraction.



Note — According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, in 2012 poison centers received 6,226 calls for unintended exposures by children age five and younger to highly-concentrated packets of laundry detergent. It is vital for adults to keep single-load liquid laundry packets, as well as other cleaning products, away from children. Make it a point to keep the Poison Control number handy. It is 1(800)222-1222.

*A good rule
of thumb for
disposing of
laundry
products:
Give unused
portions to a
friend
or
pour down
the drain!*

*Be sure to
recycle the
product
container.*



Each day as clothing is removed, decisions must be made regarding the care of each garment.

What decisions are you making?

Tips for best results

Sort by more than just color: To assure best results, be sure to sort laundry prior to washing. Sorting should include separating by the following:

- **Color** — Separate whites, darks and bright colors. Different temperatures are needed for each to reduce chance of color loss.
- **Fabric** — Sort according to fabric type and texture.
- **Surface** — Separate lint givers from lint takers.
- **Construction** — Tough or delicate materials should be separated.
- **Dirt** — Sort heavily soiled from lightly soiled garments.
- **Pesticides** — Always wash laundry that has been exposed to chemicals separate from other items.

Cutting down on time

Best results occur when good practices are followed. Some simple tips to keep in mind are:

- Close zippers, hooks, hook-and-loop fasteners and eyes to prevent snagging. Tie drawstrings and ribbons to avoid tangling with other garments.
- Empty pockets and brush off loose dirt and lint. Melted gum, candy, crayons and other pocket items can create extra work and machine damage.
- Make sure non washable items, such as belts, trims and jewelry, are not included in laundry.
- Repair items before laundering. Rips and tears grow if left unrepaired.
- Treat all stains and spots with a recommended pretreatment.
- Some items, such as permanent press garments, need to be turned inside out to prevent product damage.
- Place delicate items in a small, mesh laundry bag.



Choose the right washing procedure

There are four basic washing procedures. These include:

- **Regular (high spin)** — sturdy cotton/linens
Wash Setting — regular cycle
Wash Temperature:
 - Whites — hot
 - Normal — warm
 - Bright or dark — cold
 - Heavily soiled — hot or warm
- **Permanent Press and No Iron Items (medium spin)**
Wash Setting — permanent press
Water Level — medium or high, to prevent wrinkling
Wash Temperature:
 - Whites — hot
 - Colored Garments — warmRinse all in cold
- **Delicate (medium spin)** — loose knits, lingerie, lace, sheer, embroidered
Wash Setting — delicate
Water Level — medium or high, to avoid abrasion
Wash Temperature — warm or cold, to avoid fading
- **Wool (low spin)** — only wools labeled safe to machine launder. Do not place in dryer unless recommended.
Wash Setting — delicate
Water Level — medium to high, to minimize shrinking or pilling
Water Temperature — cold wash and rinse

Note — It is helpful to know the basics of washer cycles. A washing cycle has a speed at which it agitates or tumbles the laundry, and a different speed that spins the water out of the laundry. The cycle you choose is based on the amount of agitation and spin the load requires and can tolerate.

Other thoughts for success

- Know your water. If you have hard water, add more detergent or use a water softener in the washing machine.
- Don't over load the washing machine.
- Reduce bacteria in laundry by:
 - Separating those items such as dish rags or kitchen towels
 - Washing hands after placing dirty clothes in washing machine
 - Using a disinfectant that is safe when a family member has a contagious illness
- Avoid extra work by moving clothes immediately to dryer when wash cycle is complete.

Working together for success

Make laundry a family affair. Children can help and take on responsibly as soon as they can dress themselves. Children enjoy learning about color and texture. Tips for making laundry a family affair include:

- Have family members sort laundry in baskets marked with appropriate labels before bringing to the laundry room.
- Empty pockets prior to placing garments in laundry baskets.
- Older children and adults can pretreat stains.
- At a young age, teach children to help with folding of laundry. Matching socks into pairs can be fun for children.
- Remind all family members not to place wet articles in laundry baskets.

Conclusion

Tackling your laundry does not just happen, it is a process. Each day a garment is taken off, a decision is whether it is thrown in a corner of the room or placed in a laundry basket to be properly cleaned. When everyone is practicing safe and proper care of items to be laundered, tackling the laundry is easier. Proper daily care means clothing lasts and looks like new longer.

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