

Extension Update From: Sarah Purcell, Extension Educator Phone: 402-269-2301
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Laundry Solutions for Holiday Stains

It is important to treat and wash stains promptly, especially during the holiday season. The longer a stain sits on a fabric, the more difficult the stain may be to remove.

Be sure to check the stain after treating and laundering. If the stain remains, treat the stain again and wash again. Dryer heat can permanently set stains. Follow these guidelines for removing some holiday stains:

Butter, gravy, and salad dressing (oil-based stains): Pretreat with a prewash stain remover. Launder in the hottest water that's safe for the fabric.

Chocolate stains: Pretreat or prewash in warm water with a product containing enzymes. Or, treat with a prewash stain remover. Launder. If the stain remains, rewash using a bleach safe for fabric.

Cranberry sauce, apple cider, pumpkin pie, and fruit pies (fruit-based stains): Treat these stains promptly. Remove excess fruit and run the fabric under cold water. Wash the item as soon as possible using the warmest water and bleach that are safe for the fabric.

Coffee, tea, wine, alcoholic beverages, and soft drinks (beverage stains): Soak or sponge stain in cool water. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover or liquid laundry detergent. Launder using oxygen bleach or chlorine bleach, if it is safe for the fabric.

Colorful cakes and desserts (food-coloring stains): Sponge stain promptly with cool water. If this doesn't remove stain, soak stain in cool water for at least 30 minutes. After soaking, pretreat with a prewash stain remover or liquid laundry detergent, then launder.

Cosmetic stains: Pretreat with prewash stain remover, liquid laundry detergent, paste or powder detergent or laundry additive and water. Or, rub with bar soap. Launder.

Soot stains: Shake out garment. Don't rub; you may make the stain worse. Launder washable garments using laundry detergent and the hottest water suitable for the garments. Continue laundering garments until soot and/or smoke odor are removed. You may have to launder as many as five times.

Wax stains from candles: Use a dull knife to scrape off the surface wax. Place stain between paper towels and press with a warm iron, transferring the wax to the towels. Continue, using clean paper towels, until the wax no longer transfers. Then, place the stain face down on another clean paper towel and sponge with a prewash stain remover; blot with paper towels. Let dry, then launder.

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Sarah Purcell is a Nebraska Extension Educator for Otoe County and Southeast Nebraska. She can be reached as 402-269-2301 or via email at spurcell2@unl.edu.