

### CLEANING ADVICE FROM... The Laundry Product Experts!

This handy tool offers the latest, in-depth product information, including ingredients, forms, frequently asked questions, and more!

Consumers are challenged by tough stains, such as blood, grass, mud, etc. Read on to find out how soil and stain removers can help!

### READ THE LABEL!



Product labels tell you how to properly use the product and what type of fabric and surfaces the product *can* and *cannot* be used on. Garment care labels provide the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning the garment. For the best cleaning performance, *read and follow* both product label directions *and* garment care labels.

### Colourfast Test

Before using a stain remover on a washable fabric, always test for colourfastness. Colourfast means the fabric colour won't fade or run when it's washed. Apply the stain remover directly to an unnoticeable part of the garment, such as an inside seam. Wait 5-10 minutes. Rinse with water. The stain remover is safe for the garment if the fabric colour doesn't fade or bleed. Most stain removers can be used on most colourfast washables, such as cotton, polyester, polyester blends, and other synthetic fabrics.

## PRODUCTS

Soil and stain removers come in many forms – each having its own benefits. Select the form that best suits your needs.

- **Prewash stain removers:** A full-strength stain treatment that's applied directly to stains *before* the wash cycle.
- **In-wash stain removers:** Add along with detergent in wash cycle. They work as a complement or booster to your regular detergent. Some in-wash stain removers can also be applied directly to stains before the wash cycle.

### Prewash (■) and In-Wash (□) Stain Removers

**Spray** – Easily controls the amount of product that's applied directly on stains. ■

**Stick** – Easy and convenient for on-the-go stains. ■

**Gel** – Thick formula that stays where you put it, so ingredients can penetrate stain. ■

**Foam** – Penetrates deep into fabrics to break up stains on contact. ■

**Wipes** – Designed to treat stains on contact. They can be applied while wearing garments and are safe for all dry-cleanable fabrics. ■

**Aerosol** – Quickly penetrates stains with the press of a button. ■

**Liquid** – Quick and easy to add to wash or apply directly to stain. ■□

**Powder** – Easily added to wash cycle or used for soaking. ■□

**Tablets** – Portable, lightweight, and dissolves quickly in any water temperature. □

**Bar** – Portable, lightweight; pretreat stains on contact. ■

## INGREDIENTS

Ingredients may be listed on product packaging. The following are common ingredients used in many soil and stain removers. Not all products contain all ingredients.

- **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 colour 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, discolouration, oxidation, and bacterial attack. They also protect colour 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.



The Soap and Detergent Association  
WEB SITE: [www.cleaning101.com](http://www.cleaning101.com)



The Soap and Detergent Association of Canada  
WEB SITE: [www.healthycleaning101.org](http://www.healthycleaning101.org)

## SAFETY FIRST

- Keep products out of children's reach during use and storage.
- Read and follow instructions on all products before using.
- Keep products in their original, labeled containers. Thoroughly wash any utensils used.
- Wash hands thoroughly after product use.
- **DO NOT COMBINE STAIN REMOVAL PRODUCTS** with ammonia, chlorine bleach, or other household cleaners. Some chemical mixtures may release irritating gases.
- In case of emergency, call the number on the product label or your U.S. Poison Control Center's toll-free hotline at **1-800-222-1222**. To locate a provincial Poison Control Centre in Canada, visit [www.healthycleaning101.org/english/safety.html](http://www.healthycleaning101.org/english/safety.html).

## DIRECTIONS FOR USE

Every product and garment label has its own directions for use. The directions tell how to use the product for satisfactory results. For example:

- *How much should be used*
- *What soils and stains it removes*
- *What fabrics it should and shouldn't be used on*
- *Appropriate water temperature and wash cycles*

The best way to know what stains and fabrics a product works best on is to **Read the Label**.

## DISPOSAL

Most household laundry products can be safely disposed of either down the drain (flushing with water) or in the trash.

- It's always best to use up products completely.
- Recycle containers where possible. Check with your local recycling facility to find out the types of items they will accept.

## SMART CLEANING: FREQUENTLY ASKED 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:

- **Pretreat 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.

Issue year: 2005

The SDA Product Fact Sheet was developed by the Consumer Education Committee of The Soap and Detergent Association. It is intended for educational purposes and is not copyrighted. The Soap and Detergent Association and its member companies do not make any guarantees or warranties, expressed or implied, with respect to the information contained herein and assume no responsibility for the use of this information.



The Soap and Detergent Association  
WEB SITE: [www.cleaning101.com](http://www.cleaning101.com)



The Soap and Detergent Association of Canada  
WEB SITE: [www.healthycleaning101.org](http://www.healthycleaning101.org)