



**Texas  
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Service**

Zerle L. Carpenter, Director  
College Station

# STAIN REMOVAL CHART FOR WASHABLE CLOTHING

Becky Saunders\*

Damage created by spots and stains or their improper removal is one of the most common reasons clothing is discarded. This chart is a guide to help you extend your clothing dollar by minimizing clothing damage.

## STAIN REMOVERS

See the inside of this publication for specific stain removal recommendations. Depending on the complexity of the stain, several methods may be necessary to remove it. **Follow manufacturers' directions for best results.**

### Bleaches<sup>1</sup>

**Chlorine bleaches** are identified by "hypochlorite." Do not use them on wool, silk, polyurethane foam, spandex or blends of these fibers; on finishes which are embossed or flame retardant; or on certain dyes. Avoid use with metal containers or objects. If in doubt about bleachability of dyes, apply one drop of mixture containing 1 tablespoon bleach to 1/4 cup water. Let stand 1 minute, blot and examine for color change. Never apply bleach directly to clothing. Always bleach the entire garment. (*Clorox*®, *Purex*®, *White Magic*®)

**Color removers** are safe for all fabrics but will remove most dyes. Avoid use with metal containers or objects. Use when bleaches are not effective. (*Rit*®, *Tintex*®)

**Commercial rust removers** (oxalic acid) may change the color of some dyes. Avoid contact with the skin. (*Bar Keepers Friend*®, *Zud*®, *Rit*®)

**Hydrogen peroxide** (3 percent solution) may change the color of some dyes. It loses strength during storage.

**Lemon juice** may damage fabric or color.

**Oxygen bleaches** are usually safe for all fabrics and colors. Do not use on fabrics with flame retardant finishes. If in doubt about bleachability of dyes, soak inconspicuous part in a solution of 1 teaspoon oxygen bleach and 1 cup hot water. Let stand 1 minute and observe any color change. Never apply directly to colored fabric. Oxygen bleaches are more effective in warm or hot water and for an extended wash or soak time. (*Purex*®, *Snowy*®, *Clorox 2*®)

### Laundry Products<sup>2</sup>

**Detergents.** Colored detergents can stain garments. All granular detergents should be made into a paste with water to pretreat a stain. Applying a liquid detergent or rubbing with bar soap is also helpful. Heavy duty detergents are useful in pretreating some grease and other stains before laundry. (*Yes*®, *Wisk*®, *Dynamo*®) Light duty detergents are helpful for lightly soiled items. these are usually liquid dishwashing detergents. (*Joy*®, *Lux*®, *Vel*®) High and low sudsing all purpose detergents are used with all fabrics. (*Tide*®, *All*®, *Cheer*®)

**Prewash products and fabric softeners.** Prewash products are available as aerosol sprays, liquids and

sticks and remove some stains. Fabric softeners can be dryer or washer added. They should be used as recommended by the manufacturer and give softness, smoothness and fragrance to fabrics, decrease static cling and reduce drying time, wrinkling and ironing. Prewash products: (*Spray'N Wash*®, *Shout*®, *Clorox Prewash*®). Dryer added fabric softeners: (*Bounce*®, *Cling Free*®, *StaPuf*®). Washer added fabric softeners: (*Downy*®, *Rain Barrel*®, *NuSoft*®).

**Soaps** may be light duty or all purpose and come in several forms. Use with soft water and on fine fabrics, baby clothes and light, soiled items. (*Ivory Snow*®)

**Water conditioners, enzyme presoak products and laundry boosters** are specialty laundry products that do not reduce or replace detergent but help it clean clothes and remove stains. Enzyme products aid in removing protein stains such as food and blood, ground-in dirt, grass stains, perspiration and in restoring whiteness. They are most effective when allowed to soak with warm water. Chlorine bleach inactivates enzymes. Water conditioners: (*Calgon*®, *Spring Rain*®, *Blue Raindrops*®). Enzyme presoaks: (*Axion*®, *Biz*®). Laundry boosters: (*Arm & Hammer*®, *LaFrance*®, *20 Mule Team Borax*®).

\* Extension clothing specialist, The Texas A&M University System

### Solvents<sup>3</sup>

#### For Nongreasy Stains—

**Ammonia.** Use nonsudsy household ammonia. May change the color of some dyes. Moistening with vinegar may or may not restore color.

**Fingernail polish remover** (acetone) is not safe for acetate, triacetate and modacrylic fabrics. Use *amyl acetate* if available locally from drug stores.

**Isopropyl (rubbing alcohol).** Dilute to two parts water for one part alcohol on acetate. May remove color.

**White household vinegar** may change the color of some dyes. Moistening with ammonia may or may not restore color.

In addition to the above solvents for nongreasy stains, a "wet spotter" may be effective. Prepare by mixing one part glycerine (sold at drug stores), one part liquid hand dishwashing detergent and eight parts water. Store in squeeze bottle and shake before use.

#### For Greasy Stains —

Solvents for greasy stains and prespotting are also available in aerosol sprays and tubes. Carefully

follow manufacturers' directions for use of each to avoid discoloration or other permanent damage. These products are especially effective on ring-around-the-collar, food stains and oily stains on durable press and synthetics.

Buy those containing perchloroethylene, trichloroethylene, petroleum solvents, hydrocarbons or distillates. (*Energine*<sup>®</sup>, *K-2R Spot Remover*<sup>®</sup>)

**Note: Never use carbon tetrachloride, gasoline or lighter fluid, because of the extreme danger involved.**

In addition to using a dry-cleaning solvent, a "dry spotter" may be effective. Prepare by mixing one part coconut or mineral oil (sold in drug or health food stores) to eight parts dry-cleaning solvent. Keep tightly capped and shake before use.

- Do not rub. A light or worn look may result. Fine sandpaper may decrease matted appearance.
- To avoid circling and spreading the stain, use small amounts of solvent, working from the center of the stain toward the outside. Use quick, light brushing strokes.
- Repeat procedure if necessary.
- Allow solvent to dry; then launder.

- Remaining odor may mean the whole stain has not been removed. Time, air circulation, and 1/2 cup of baking soda in final rinse will remove odor.
- Age and heat exposure may cause stains. Never store soiled garments.

#### Procedures for Using Solvents:

- Place stain face down on clean white paper towels or a cloth. Replace towels or cloth frequently to prevent stain transfer.
- New nylon bristle brushes are helpful. First test stain removers on the brush to avoid the possibility of additional stains. Lightly tap or hit brush bristles with solvent on the stain.
- Test for color or fabric change on underside seam or facing.
- Apply stain remover sparingly to the underside with a clean, soft and lintless cloth. This forces the stain off the surface and out of the fabric.
- Water spots some fabrics. First test unlabeled fabrics in an inconspicuous area.

## COMMON STAINS AND HOW TO REMOVE THEM

Most common spots and stains will be removed by prompt and correct washing practices. However, some stains require special procedures. The complexity of today's dyes, fabrics and finishes makes it difficult to satisfactorily remove all stains without damaging the fabric. However, the following procedures will prove satisfactory in most cases. Removal procedures may need to be repeated several times.

After following the recommended treatment, work in liquid detergent and rinse to remove any residue from stain solvents. Then, if a slight stain remains,

launder in water as hot as suitable for the fabric along with an appropriate bleach. Warmer wash water temperature at 120 degrees F (49 degrees C) helps remove stains while 140 degrees F (60 degrees C) is suggested for heavily soiled items. Use a cool, complete rinse. Never dry in dryer or press a garment until the stain has been removed. **Refer to the garment's permanent care label for warnings concerning water temperature, bleach and overall washability and the reverse side of this publication for additional stain removal information and stain remover product information.**

STAIN	REMOVAL
Adhesive tape Chewing gum Rubber cement.	For gum, first harden by rubbing with ice. Remove remaining stain with a <i>grease solvent</i> <sup>3</sup> .
Asphalt Tar	Sponge immediately with a <i>grease solvent</i> <sup>3</sup> . Repeat. Stain may be impossible to remove.
Beverages (alcoholic and soft drinks). Perfumes	Sponge in cool water and glycerine. Soak 30 minutes. Treat with <i>laundry product</i> <sup>2</sup> . Sponge with <i>alcohol</i> <sup>3</sup> if safe for fabric.
Blood Carbon paper (regular) Pencil, lead	Sponge with cool water. Soak 30 minutes. Rub liquid <i>detergent</i> <sup>2</sup> into area; rinse. If stain remains, apply a few drops of <i>ammonia</i> <sup>3</sup> and repeat <i>detergent</i> <sup>2</sup> treatment. Lead pencil may be removed from some fabrics with a soft eraser.
Butter Cream Chocolate Cosmetics Gravy Grease Mayonnaise Milk Oil Ring-around-the-collar Sauces Smoke Soot Vomit Wax	Soak stain in cold water for 30 minutes. Work <i>laundry products</i> <sup>2</sup> into stain. Rinse and dry. If stain remains, sponge with a <i>grease solvent</i> and dry. Repeat if necessary.
Candle wax Paraffin	Carefully scrape excess off surface and place between several layers of paper tissue and press with warm iron. Remove remaining stain with a <i>grease solvent</i> <sup>3</sup> , <i>chlorine bleach</i> <sup>1</sup> or <i>ammonia</i> <sup>3</sup> .
Candy (nonchocolate) Catsup Coffee Egg Tea (no cream) Vegetables	Sponge stain with cold water. Soak for 30 minutes in <i>laundry product</i> <sup>2</sup> . Sponging with <i>vinegar</i> <sup>3</sup> followed by <i>alcohol</i> <sup>3</sup> or <i>chlorine bleach</i> <sup>1</sup> may remove final traces.
Carbon paper (duplicating) Ink (ball-point)	Sponge with <i>alcohol</i> <sup>3</sup> . If stain remains, sponge with <i>grease solvent</i> <sup>3</sup> .
Crayon	Carefully scrape off excess. Sponge <i>laundry product</i> <sup>2</sup> onto stain. Rinse and dry. If stain remains, sponge with <i>grease solvent</i> <sup>3</sup> .
Deodorant Perspiration Urine	Sponge with <i>laundry product</i> <sup>2</sup> . Launder in water temperature and <i>bleach</i> <sup>1</sup> suitable for fabric. Color may or may not be restored by sponging fresh stains with <i>ammonia</i> <sup>3</sup> and old stains with <i>vinegar</i> <sup>3</sup> . Rinse. For oil stains, sponge with <i>grease solvent</i> <sup>3</sup> .

STAIN	REMOVAL
Fabric softener	For black spots, rub with <i>laundry product</i> <sup>2</sup> and launder. For a gray or bluish buildup, soak in <i>detergent</i> <sup>2</sup> and <i>bleach</i> <sup>1</sup> ; launder.
Fingernail polish	Sponge with <i>nail polish remover</i> <sup>3</sup> if safe for fabric.
Fruits Juices	Sponge immediately with cool water. If safe for fabric, pour boiling water through stain. Work <i>laundry product</i> <sup>2</sup> into stain; rinse. <i>Bleach</i> <sup>1</sup> may remove final traces.
Grass	Work <i>laundry product</i> <sup>2</sup> into the stain and rinse. If safe for dye, moisten with <i>alcohol</i> <sup>3</sup> .
Laundry product	Soak in one part <i>vinegar</i> <sup>3</sup> to four parts water in a plastic container.
Mildew	If safe for fabric, moisten with <i>lemon juice</i> <sup>1</sup> and salt to dry in the sun or sponge with <i>hydrogen peroxide</i> <sup>1</sup> .
Mimeograph fluid	Depending upon the type of fluid and fabric, sponge with <i>alcohol</i> <sup>3</sup> , turpentine or <i>nail polish remover</i> <sup>3</sup> .
Mud	Let dry and brush. Soak in cold water, with <i>laundry product</i> <sup>2</sup> . For iron clay soils remove same as rust. If stain remains, sponge with <i>alcohol</i> <sup>3</sup> .
Mustard	Work glycerine into stain. Rinse. Launder. Prolonged soaking may be necessary. If stain remains, sponge with <i>alcohol</i> <sup>3</sup> .
Paint Varnish	If possible, treat before the stain dries. Sponge with thinner solvent recommended on the label or with turpentine. While still wet with solvent, apply <i>laundry product</i> <sup>2</sup> and soak. Launder. Repeat if necessary. Stain may be impossible to remove.
Rust	Sprinkle salt on the stain and moisten with <i>lemon juice</i> <sup>1</sup> if safe for fabric. Dry in sun and rinse. Repeat, if necessary. <i>Commercial rust</i> or <i>color removers</i> <sup>1</sup> may be used as directed. Do not use <i>chlorine bleach</i> <sup>1</sup> .
Scorch	Work <i>laundry product</i> <sup>2</sup> into stain immediately. Rinse. If stain remains, apply <i>hydrogen peroxide</i> <sup>1</sup> and <i>ammonia</i> <sup>3</sup> . Rinse. Severe scorch damages fabrics and cannot be removed.
Shoe polish	Depending on the kind and color, several methods may need to be used. First, work <i>laundry product</i> <sup>2</sup> into stain and rinse. Sponge with <i>alcohol</i> <sup>3</sup> and rinse. Apply <i>grease solvent</i> <sup>3</sup> or turpentine.
Yellowing	Wash in hot water with increased amount of <i>laundry product</i> <sup>2</sup> and as strong a <i>bleach</i> <sup>1</sup> as safe for the fabric. Prolonged soaking may be necessary. Use a <i>color remover</i> <sup>1</sup> on white fabrics.

## PRINCIPLES OF STAIN REMOVAL

- Know as much about the stain and fabric as possible. Refer to the garment's permanent care label.
- Heat sets stains. Do not press a stained fabric or dry it in the dryer.
- Treat stains quickly. Old stains may be impossible to remove.
- Old remedies, such as applying milk to ink stains, are unreliable. The milk may produce an additional stain.
- Test stain removers on an underside seam or facing to determine if harmful. Watch for any change in color, appearance or texture.
- Follow instructions for the use, storage and safety of all cleaning agents carefully. Always use in a well ventilated room.

- Excess stains should be carefully blotted or scraped from the surface without damaging fabric.
- When in doubt, fragile fabrics or large, difficult stains should be left to a professional dry cleaner. Point out the location and type of stain, if known.
- Some stains, such as soft drinks or fruit juices, may be invisible or difficult to see because of fabric design.
- Never mix stain removers (especially ammonia and chlorine bleach). If more than one remover is needed, rinse thoroughly between the use of each.



## HOW TO IDENTIFY UNKNOWN STAINS

- Observe the color, appearance and location on the garment.
- Smell the odor.
- Feel the texture.

## REMOVING UNKNOWN STAINS

Unknown stains in a dry-cleanable garment should be taken to a professional drycleaner. The following sequence, beginning with the mildest action, can be followed without damaging washable garments, as long as the procedure is stopped when it becomes harmful to the fabric. Follow manufacturers' directions carefully for all products used.

- Severity ↓
1. Soak in cold water for 30 minutes.
  2. Work *laundry product*<sup>2</sup> into the stain and allow to remain 30 minutes and rinse.
  3. Launder using a *bleach*<sup>1</sup> safe for the fabric.
  4. Soak overnight in a *presoaking product*<sup>2</sup>. Those containing enzymes attack protein stains.
  5. Launder with *detergent*<sup>2</sup> in water temperature as hot as suitable for fabric.
  6. Sponge with *grease solvent*<sup>3</sup>. Repeat if necessary, rinse and launder.
  7. Launder using a *commercial rust* or *color remover*<sup>1</sup>.
  8. Mix equal parts *bleach*<sup>1</sup> (safe for the fabric) and water. Apply directly to the stain. If stain remains, it cannot be removed.

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