



Family Living

Does your home pass the white gloves test?

• Spring Cleaning the Health Smart Way

BY BARBARA M. SOULE
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Spring is a great time to clean those forgotten germ hotspots and practice proper cleaning procedures you can use the rest of the year. After all germs in the home are estimated to cause millions of cases of illnesses every year—from the common cold to potentially life-threatening foodborne illnesses. But before you start shaking out the rugs and cleaning out the refrigerators, check out these tips for cleaning your home and be Health Smart.

[Barbara M. Soule is a member of the Georgia - Pacific health Smart Institute's Advisory Board and a registered nurse who specializes in infection prevention, control and quality management at a hospital in Olympia, Washington. She is also a homemaker and the mother of two.]
The Kitchen—Warning: you about to enter the most bacteria-laden room in your home. Not only are the appliances and surfaces exposed and dirt during regular daily use. They are also exposed to potentially contaminated food. Clean surfaces with warm soapy water, then dry them with paper towels. Which help you wipe up and throw away the germs. You can use a disinfectant for added protection. When cleaning the refrigerator, scrub the inside with a detergent hot water and then wipe dry with paper towels. Keep in mind that the lowest shelf of the refrigerator is considered a common breeding ground for bacteria due to accidental spills.
The Bathroom—Moisture makes your bathroom an ideal breeding ground

for bacteria so it's important to wipe every surface with a paper towel and disinfectant to help protect your family from illness. Wipe your shower curtains with a disinfectant or wash it if it is machine washable. Hang the curtain back up and dry it with a paper towel. In every day use, you can prevent mold and mildew on the shower curtain by shaking it after each use and leaving it pulled open so moisture can evaporate. Clean the toilet, tub and floor with disinfectant and warm water. Wipe surfaces dry with paper towels.
The Nursery—Because babies have developing immune systems they are especially susceptible to colds and other illnesses and can be endangered by person-to-person or person-to-surface germ transmission. Spring-cleaning is the time to clean toys with hot, soapy water and dry them with paper towels. Use a disinfectant for added protection. Also, wipe the changing table with a disinfectant and paper towels. Don't forget to do the same for other "hot spots" such as the diaper pail and the crib. After cleaning the nursery make sure to wash your hands with warm, soapy water and then dry them using a disposable paper towel. Finally (and this sounds obvious but is so often overlooked by new moms) remember to properly wash your hands before and after changing your baby then dry hands with paper towels.
Living Room, Bedroom and Basement—Cleaning other rooms in your home should be more thorough than your regular cleaning routine for vacuuming and dusting. When spring cleaning, move furniture to help collect dust bunnies and expose hidden areas that are usually missed during regular cleaning. If you have a pet, you should also steam clean or shampoo your doors to help prevent mold and mildew growth. Wipe basement items with paper towels and disinfectant to help remove germs

and throw them away. Also, consider throwing away what you don't need—if you haven't used it in over a year, you might not need it.
Laundry Room—Moisture can be the source of problems in your laundry room so be aware of it. Do not leave wet clothes in the washer where they can sour and where mildew can form. Also, after removing clothes from the washing machine, leave the door ajar so excess moisture can evaporate instead of being held inside the machine where it can potentially harbor mold. Dry your clothes in an automatic dryer whenever possible to significantly reduce the number of microorganisms in the laundry. Surface of the washing machine with paper towels after each use to remove any spilled detergent.
Top 10 Forgotten Germ Hot spots in the home
 Even though its called Spring-Cleaning, the process of thoroughly cleaning your home should take place twice a year: in the fall and in the spring—especially if there are any allergies in your family. Spring-Cleaning is the ideal time to get rid of collections of allergens like mold and dust out of your house. In the kitchen, it's time to clean out cabinets, check food packages for tears and clean behind the stove and the refrigerator. But there are other, less obvious areas that deserve extra attention. I call them "forgotten germ hot spots." When you finish cleaning them ask yourself, "Do they pass the white glove test?"
 1. Behind the refrigerator
 2. Behind the washer and dryer
 3. Curtains and drapes
 4. Hard-to-reach paintings
 5. Radiators
 6. Computer keyboard/TV remote control/ telephone
 7. Doorknobs/light switched
 8. Window sills/blinds
 9. Toilet: tank, handle, seat
 10. Garbage bins

Seniors turn their homes into a treasure chest

• High costs of living and low rate returns on saving threaten Miss Wise's nest-egg.

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Without a solution, she is facing the sale of her home—and she is frightened of her future. A financial lifeline known as the FHA-insured reverse mortgage will be assisting Miss Wise turn her home into treasure chest.
 Piloted in 1989 on cooperation with AARP and currently available across the county, the FHA reverse mortgage programs allows homeowners 62 years of age or older to securely borrow against their home equity. They receive loan proceeds in a manner they select and no repayment is due until the homeowner no longer resides in the home. There are no income, asset,

employment or credit qualification. The program assists individuals needing to supplement their income by converting. Home equity into tax-free income while retaining ownership of their home.
 "Many older adults do not have extra money for unforeseen emergencies. Perhaps an extra \$300 a month gives them peace of mind and allows them to stay in their home," says Jeffrey Moulton, "The program was developed so people would not have to decide between eating or fixing their home. The families are supportive because they know Mom and Dad need help, and the children may be unable to assist financially."
 The benefits of this program are numerous. The tax-free cash that is made available can be used for any

purpose. Many participants have used the loan proceeds to payoff their existing mortgages, to pay their property taxes, for medical expenses, to pay off credit cards and to make home improvements.
 Reverse mortgage payments do not affect Social Security or Medicare benefits.
 Seniors often worry that the expenses of homeownership will force them to lower their standard of living. This is a choice that most older homeowners simply do not want to make. With the reverse mortgage program many seniors are able to turn their home into a treasure chest and enjoy a higher quality of life.
 To learn more, individuals can contact Jeffrey Moulton of the Reverse Mortgage Department at 800-950-3297.

Census from page 1

have been encouraging people to leave certain questions blank to skew results, census officials said.
 Those who refuse to answer, try to skew results or provide false information, could face fines up to \$1,000.
 But Census Bureau Director Kenneth Prewitt said, to his knowledge, the

Department of Justice has never prosecuted anyone who did not respond.
 "There will always be people who choose not to take part," said census spokeswoman Jacquelyn Flaherty. "It's usually based on misinformation about why it's needed or how it's used."

She said the Census Bureau is not affiliated in any way with the FBI or IRS, as some people believe. The agency doesn't share any information with law enforcement or tax officials. Flaherty emphasized that census forms are confidential, and employees who release census information face \$5,000 fines and a year of jail.

Dome from page 1

said John Abrams, 17, a student at Central Valley High in Spokane who traveled about 300 miles to see it come down. "When people thought of Seattle they thought of the Space Needle and the Kingdom."
 A third of the debris will be used to build the Seattle Seahawks' new football stadium and the rest will be sold as raw material for construction,

said project spokesman Pete Pedersen. The dome, built on the cheap in 1976 for \$67 million, underwent \$70 million in roof repairs in 1994 and millions in assorted enhancement projects—and still isn't paid for. The dome was a necessity in the Rainy City, but fans complained that the concrete stadium was too small for football and not intimate

enough for baseball.
 What's more, it leaked. And in 1994, four 15-pound ceiling tiles crashed into the stands just hours before a Mariners' game. Still, many mourned its loss. "This is the magic dust of heroes," said Philip Courier as he scraped fine, gray dust from the windscreen of a car into a small, clear plastic box.

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