

## University of Missouri Extension

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# Stain Removal From Washable Fabrics

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The procedures described are appropriate for removing stains from washable fabric. Check the care label for recommended laundering procedures, and follow those instructions. If instructions state that the garment is to be washed, it cannot be assumed that dry cleaning is also safe.

## Stain index from A to Z

A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z

### [A]

- Adhesive tape
- After shave lotion
- Alcoholic beverages
- Antiperspirant
- Apples
- Asphalt
- Auto wax

### [B]

- Baby food
- Baby formula
- Bananas
- Beer
- Berries
- Beverages
- Blood
- Blood
- Blueberry
- Bluing
- Body discharge

### [C]

- Cake frosting
- Calamine lotion
- Candle wax
- Caster oil
- Catsup
- Cheese, cheese sauce
- Cherry
- Chewing gum
- Chili sauce

- Chocolate, cocoa
- Cod liver oil
- Coffee, no cream
- Coffee, with cream
- Collar/cuff soil
- Color bleeding
- Corn syrup
- Correction fluid, typewriter
- Cosmetics (oil based — face powder, eyeliner, shadow, etc.)
- Cough syrup
- Crayon
- Crayon
- Cream
- Cream soups

**[D]**

- Dairy products
- Deodorant
- Dinginess, yellowing
- Dye stains
- Dye transfer

**[E]**

- Egg white
- Egg yolk
- Epoxy glue
- Eye drops

**[F]**

- Fabric dye
- Fabric softener
- Feces
- Felt tip marker
- Felt tip marker
- Fish slime
- Floor wax
- Food coloring
- Formula, baby
- Frosting
- Fruit and fruit juices
- Furniture polish, wax

**[G]**

- Gelatin
- Glue (airplane, contact, mucilage, plastic)
- Glue, epoxy
- Glue, white
- Grass
- Gravy
- Grease

**[H]**

- Hair dye
- Hair spray
- Hand lotion
- Hard water problems
- Home permanent

#### **[I]**

- Ice cream
- Ink
- Insecticides
- Iodine

#### **[J]**

- Jam
- Jelly

#### **[K]**

- Ketchup
- Kool Aid®

#### **[L]**

- Lard

#### **[M]**

- Makeup, oil-based
- Makeup, water-based
- Maple syrup
- Margarine
- Mayonnaise
- Mercurochrome
- Mildew
- Milk
- Mixed drinks
- Molasses
- Mouthwash
- Mucous
- Mud
- Mustard

#### **[N]**

- Nail polish
- Nose drops

#### **[O]**

- Ointment, salve

#### **[P]**

- Paint, latex, water based

Paint, solvent based

- Paint, watercolor
- Peaches
- Peanut oil
- Pears
- Pencil
- Permanent wave solution
- Perspiration
- Pesticides
- Pine resin
- Polish, shoe, furniture
- Preserves (fruit)
- Pudding
- Putty

**[R]**

- Rubber cement
- Rust

**[S]**

- Salad dressing
- Salve, ointment
- School glue
- Scorch
- Shaving cream
- Sherbet
- Shoe polish and dye
- Shoe polish and dye
- Smoke
- Soft drinks
- Soot
- Soups containing meat
- Soups containing vegetables
- Sour cream
- Stamp pad ink
- Steak sauce
- Suntan cream
- Syrup, corn or maple

**[T]**

- Tar
- Tea
- Tomato-based products
- Toothpaste
- Tree sap
- Typewriter correction fluid
- Typewriter ribbon

**[U]**

- Unknown stains
- Urine

**[V]**

- Vegetable oil
- Vinegar, colored
- Vomit

**[W]**

- Watercolor paint
- Wax, floor, car, furniture
- Whiskey
- White glue
- Wine, red or white

**[Y]**

- Yellowing
- Yogurt

**Stain removal tips**

- Blot liquid stains immediately.
- Test stain-removal product on seam allowance or hidden part of garment. If color is affected, do not use that product.
- Allow all dry cleaning solvents to completely evaporate before washing. Rinse out stain remover products before washing. Always use in well-ventilated room. Follow manufacturer's instructions when available.
- Work from back. Place stained side of fabric down. Work on absorbent surface such as clean white paper towels. Change towels often to avoid restaining.
- Treat stains promptly. Fresh stains are more easily removed.
- Read garment care label. Take non-washable items to dry cleaner. Take suede, leather or fur to dry cleaner. Point out and identify the stain.
- Avoid excessive rubbing which may damage the fibers or finish, remove the color or spread the stain.
- Do not use colored towels or cloths that may leave a dye stain. Avoid using linty cloths or paper.
- Avoid using hot water on stains of unknown origin.
- Do not use chlorine bleach on silk, wool or spandex fibers. Do not use on urethane fabrics or polyurethane foam.
- For fabrics made from a fiber blend, use stain removal method appropriate for most sensitive fiber.
- Do not iron stained fabrics. Heat may set stain.
- Line dry during stain removal process. Do not put item in dryer until stain is completely removed.
- Follow stain removal procedures until the stain is removed. Then launder the item according to label instructions. Do not dry in dryer until you are sure the stain is removed.
- Always launder items after treating to remove residues of both the stain and the stain remover.

**References**

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- Soap and Detergent Association. Removing Stains from Washable Items, n.d.
- United States Department of Agriculture. Removing Stains from Fabrics. Home and Garden Bulletin number 62. Washington, D.C., 1976.
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## Related MU Extension publications

- G1914, Laundering Pesticide-Contaminated Clothing  
<http://extension.missouri.edu/p/G1914>
- GH145, After the Fire is Out: Cleaning Household Textiles and Clothing  
<http://extension.missouri.edu/p/GH145>
- GH5928, How to Prevent and Remove Mildew — Home Methods  
<http://extension.missouri.edu/p/GH5928>

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