



A weekly question/answer column

How Do I Get Rid Of Stubborn Holiday Stains?

Louise Young answers:*

According to Murphy's Law, as soon as you clean the carpet or do the laundry, you will immediately spill. The good news is that for nearly every stain there is a solution. Coupled with care labels and cleaning product directions, these guidelines can help keep your holiday spotless.

- **Beverage and fruit stains** -- soak in lukewarm water for at least 15 minutes with one-half teaspoon dish washing detergent and one teaspoon white vinegar. Then rinse. If this doesn't work, try sponging the stain with rubbing alcohol starting from the center of the stain. If needed, soak for 30 minutes in one quart warm water and one teaspoon enzyme presoak. As a last resort, try bleach that is safe for the fabric.
- **Candle wax** -- rub with an ice cube and carefully scrape excess wax. Place between several layers of paper toweling and press with a warm (not hot) iron. Remove the remaining color stain with bleach or color remover that is safe for the fabric.
- **Greasy stains including adhesive tape and gum** -- scrape the area and, if needed, use ice to solidify the excess stain material. Saturate the area with pretreatment laundry stain remover. Aerosol sprays work better on greasier stains. Wait for the product to penetrate and then rub with a heavy duty liquid detergent if needed. Launder immediately.
- **Protein stains (meat, eggs, milk products)** -- scrape the surface of excess material then rinse in cold water and soak in cool water for 30 minutes with one-half teaspoon liquid hand washing detergent and one tablespoon ammonia. Rub gently and rinse. If stain persists, soak in an enzyme products for 30 more minutes. If needed, launder with chlorine or oxygenated bleach first check fabric care directions). If a greasy residue remains, sponge with a cleaning fluid safe for the fabric.

* Louise Young, Utah State University Extension Clothing Specialist