Red and White: Clean Them Right
Tips for bright and beautiful laundry results

February is the month to show off those red and white clothes. On National Wear Red Day, celebrated on Friday, February 25th, the color red, and particularly a red dress, serves as a banner to increase awareness about the ability all women have to improve their heart health and live stronger, longer lives. White Shirt Day, celebrated annually on February 11th, honors the men and women who participated in a sit-down strike at General Motors in 1937. On a day that recognizes workplace empowerment, the white shirts represent equal respect and treatment for blue-collar workers. And then there’s the red that we wear on Valentine’s Day and the red, white and blue that’s a natural wardrobe choice on President’s Day.

All of which means that February’s laundry loads can create a few cleaning challenges! But Nancy Bock, Vice President of Education at the Soap and Detergent Association, has some guidelines that will wash away your concerns.

General Laundering Tips
Sort by color: whites and/or lights in one load; darks in another.

Read the garment care labels. It may be necessary to further sort the loads by water temperature (hot, warm or cold), bleach requirements (chlorine bleach, non-chlorine bleach or no bleach) and washing machine cycle (regular, permanent press or delicate/knits).

Most red items should be laundered in a cold water wash, either by themselves or with other bright colors.

For combo colored garments, such as a red shirt with a white collar or a print on a red background, add a dye trapping cloth to the wash.
It is designed to absorb and trap loose dyes during laundering, locking them away so they can’t redeposit on other clothes.

Pre-treat stains before putting items in the washing machine.

Before putting items in the dryer, check to make sure any stains are completely removed. Otherwise, the heat of the dryer may set them permanently.

Red Alert
Laundering-red garments, particularly new ones, can present some additional challenges. That’s because, in order to produce a bright, rich color, red fabrics are often over-dyed. When laundered, the color may fade or the red dye may transfer to other items. If the dye bleeds:

Pre-treat the area and re-launder the garment in the warmest water that’s safe for the fabric.

Don’t dry the garment until the bleeding is removed, as drying in a hot dryer may set the dye that has bled.

Once the bleeding is removed, dry promptly. Dye transfer can also occur when damp items stay in contact with each other for a period of time.

Do the Whites Right
Read the fabric care label. The fact that the item is white doesn’t necessarily guarantee that it’s safe to use bleach, especially chlorine bleach. Factors such as the fabric’s fiber content (including silk, wool, mohair and spandex), finishes (such as the flame-retardant finish on children’s nightclothes) and certain trims will affect item’s suitability for bleach.

If bleach is a no-no and there are stains, pre-treat them with a pre-wash stain remover, check the cleaning product label first to make sure it is safe for the fabric, or pre-soak the item using detergent pre-soak laundry product that’s safe for the fabric. Mix the soaking agent with water and then add the item. Minimum soaking time is 30 minutes. Longer soaking, as much as overnight, may be necessary.

Earth-Friendly Moisturizers
One month it’s green tea, the next it’s pomegranate. “New” ingredients, the same ones that people have been using on their skin for centuries, are revolutionizing the skin care industry. But venerated as they may be, that may not be the solution to all your skin care woes. It’s not that natural ingredients don’t work – in fact, plant ingredients can be more effective than the synthetics we’ve all become used to. It’s that they don’t all do the same thing. To help choose the right moisturizer for you, we’ve put together a guide explaining just what these plant-based ingredients do for your skin.

Jojoba Oil: Anti-blemish and Anti-aging
Jojoba oil is a skin softener that behaves almost the same way as the oil your skin produces naturally, balancing oil levels and preventing moisture loss. It’s ideal for mature skin, which generates less moisture with age. If breakouts happen
occasionally, the mild antibacterial properties in jojoba oil can help prevent the few blemishes you do get.

**Green Tea: Anti-blemish, Anti-inflammatory, and Anti-aging**

Green tea is full of antioxidants – those wonder nutrients that battle the free radicals produced by cells in our bodies when they use oxygen. Free radicals cause damage that can lead to heart disease, diabetes and cancer. A 2001 study published in the Journal of Carcinogenesis found that topically applying green tea limited UV induced damage to the skin. Green tea is also an anti-inflammatory that can relieve acne, redness and rashes, which are common with sensitive skin.

**Argan Oil: Deep Moisturizer, Anti-blemish, Anti-inflammatory and Anti-aging**

Extracted from the nuts of Morocco’s argan trees, which grow on the edge of the Sahara, argan oil is high in vitamin E and essential fatty acids. Although its effectiveness has not yet been scientifically proven, Moroccan women use this “liquid gold,” as it is commonly called, to treat a multitude of skin ailments, including acne, dry skin, psoriasis, eczema and wrinkles. Today, the tree faces extinction. To preserve the threatened species, a Moroccan professor and an international aid group established all-women cooperatives to extract the oil, providing an economic incentive for preservation of the tree and a much needed income to rural women.

**Shea Butter: Deep Moisturizer, Anti-inflammatory or Anti-aging**

Another African import, shea butter comes from the karate tree in the tropical regions of West Africa. Full of essential fatty acids, shea butter is a potent moisturizer and provides relief from itching, sunburn, eczema and allergies and can diminish wrinkles. Though shea butter doesn’t clog pores, raw shea butter creams are very thick and too heavy for oily skin, says Dr. Leslie Baumann, author of The Skin Type Solution. Look for products containing fairly traded shea butter.

**Pomegranate: Anti-aging**

Pomegranate is rich in antioxidants and is the primary ingredient in many moisturizers formulated to slow down signs of aging. Its oil may even diminish existing wrinkles. In 2005, the University of Michigan Medical School found that pomegranate oil repaired skin cells and promoted collagen production, which keeps your skin elastic.

**Aloe Vera: Anti-inflammatory**

Because of its soothing and restorative properties, aloe vera is ideal for sensitive skin and is common in anti-inflammatory products. Clinical studies have also found that aloe vera effectively reduces symptoms of psoriasis and seborrhea, a common skin condition that causes oily, red and scaly eruptions. Baumann says aloe vera can be as soothing as hydrocortisone creams, which are used to treat itching, rashes and irritation caused by everything from poison ivy to cosmetics.

(Source: National Geographic’s Green Guide)

The Five-Second Rule, Version 2.0

Have you heard about the five-second rule? If you have children or grandchildren, chances are you have. If not, let me explain. The five-second rule
is the notion that if you pick up a dropped piece of food before you can count to five, it’s o.k. to eat it. I first heard about the rule from my niece when she was young and thought it was just a way of having fun at snack time and lunch. She now tells me that fun was part of it, but they were playing with “germs.” We’re reminded about germs on food whenever there’s an outbreak of E. coli or salmonella, and whenever we read the labels on packages of uncooked meat. But we don’t have much occasion to think about the everyday practice of retrieving and eating dropped pieces of food. Microbes are everywhere around us, not just on floors. They thrive in wet kitchen sponges and end up on freshly wiped countertops.

The idea to write this article came in a recent trip with my family. We went to a drive-thru for lunch and I realized that I had removed a chicken sandwich from its protective wrapper and put it down repeatedly on the wrapper’s outer surface, which was meant to protect the sandwich by blocking microbes. What’s on the outer surface? Without the five-second rule on my mind I wouldn’t have thought to wonder.

I decided to do a little research and found a paper from Clemson University, based on a study by Jillian Clarke, a high-school intern at the University of Illinois in 2003. Ms. Clarke conducted a survey and found that slightly more than half of the men and 70 percent of the women knew of the five-second rule, and many said they followed it. She did an experiment by contaminating ceramic tiles with E. coli, placing gummy bears and cookies on the tiles for the statutory five seconds, and then analyzing the foods. They had become contaminated with bacteria. It’s not surprising that food drooped onto bacteria would collect some bacteria. But how many? Does it collect more as the seconds tick by? Is it enough to make you sick?

Prof. Paul L. Dawson and his colleagues at Clemson put some numbers on floor-to-food contamination. Their bacterium of choice was salmonella; the test surfaces were tile, wood flooring and nylon carpet; and the test foods were slices of bread and bologna. First the researchers measured how long bacteria could survive on the surfaces. They applied salmonella broth in doses of several million bacteria per square centimeter, a number typical of badly contaminated food. It is commonly thought that most bacteria are sensitive to drying out, but after 24 hours of exposure to the air, thousands of bacteria per square centimeter had survived on the tile wood, and tens of thousands on the carpet. Hundreds of salmonella were still alive after 28 days.

Professor Dawson and colleagues then placed test food slices onto salmonella-painted surfaces for varying lengths of time and counted how many live bacteria were transferred to the food. On surfaces that had been contaminated eight hours earlier, slices of bologna and bread left for five seconds took up from 150 to 8,000 bacteria. Left for a full minute, slices collected about 10 times more than that from the tile and carpet, though a lower number from the wood.

What do these numbers tell us about the five-second rule? Quick retrieval does mean fewer bacteria, but it’s no guarantee of safety. It’s true that the Clemson researchers used extremely high contamination levels for their tests.
But even if a floor – or a countertop, or sandwich wrapper – carried only a thousandth the number of bacteria applied by the researchers, the piece of food would be likely to pick up several bacteria. The infectious dose, the smallest number of bacteria that can actually cause illness, is as few as 10 for some salmonellas, fewer than 100 for the deadly strain of E. coli.

Of course, we can never know for sure how many harmful microbes there are on any surface. But we know enough now to formulate the five-second rule, version 2.0. If you drop a piece of food, pick it up quickly, take five seconds to recall that just a few bacteria can make you sick, then take a few more to think about where you dropped it and whether or not it’s worth eating.

**Your Child’s Self - Esteem**
Parents greatly shape the developing self-image of their children. A large part of children's self-concept is formed through the verbal and non-verbal, conscious and unconscious interactions between parent and child. Children who are loved by their parents unconditionally will learn self-acceptance and self-appreciation. Besides developing self-image, parents contribute to building children’s self-esteem.

**How you can help**
**Catch your child being good**
Often parents only react when their child does something wrong rather than taking time to acknowledge and reward the positive. Make a point of finding something to praise everyday. Watch the use of excessive praise without regard to the reason it may give kids an unrealistic perspective of what it takes to be successful outside the family.

**Give your undivided attention**
We sometimes pretend to listen or ignore our children’s attempts to communicate with us. This can cause children to misbehave. Children of all ages feel better about themselves when they know others value what they have to say. By listening, you convey the importance of your children’s ideas, opinions and feelings.

**Keep expectations realistic**
Recognize that each child is an individual who will develop at his or her own pace. Adjust your expectations to the child’s age, temperament, and background. Be careful not to base your expectation on your unfulfilled wishes and values rather than the children’s wants and needs.

**Create a safe, nurturing home environment**
Make your home a safe haven for your family. Never argue or fight with a spouse in front of your children. Watch for signs of abuse by others, problems in school, trouble with peers, and other potential factors that may affect your child’s self-esteem. Deal with these issues sensitively but swiftly.

**Choose your words carefully**
Children are very sensitive to parents’ words. Remember to praise your child not only for a job well done, but also for effort. During times of disappointment or crisis, your child’s weakened self-esteem can be strengthened when you let the child know that your love and support remain unchanged.

**Offer choices**
Whenever possible, allow children to make choices appropriate to their age
level. They will develop confidence by being permitted to experiment, make mistake and learn in non-threatening situations.

**Do good deeds**
Teach your child to say and do good deeds. It builds good character and produces positive feelings of self-worth.

**Defining Wealth**
How will you know when you reached your summit?

Success has many measurements, but the universal scale is wealth. Yet, wealth seems to escape a simple definition—either in the mind’s eye or on the balance sheet.

- How do you define wealth?
- Has your definition changed over the years?
- Is wealth only a matter of money?
- How do you keep score?
- When will you have "enough"—if ever?

If you see wealth as a financial target, it’s a number that probably changed over the years—reflecting not only inflation, but also your own achievements. If you originally wanted to be a millionaire, you may have already reached that goal. After all, until recently the booming stock and real estate markets easily helped lift youthful dreams of becoming a millionaire into reality.

When you achieve a level of success, your dreams and goals have a way of expanding. Reach one milestone, and you’re ready for another. That original $1 million goal may have long ago moved to $10 million, or even higher.

Now that there are more than 400 billionaires in the United States (or at least there were at last count—in October 2008), you might not be willing to settle for mere millions!

Money has a way of coming—and going. A reality check of your investment performance over the past year might prove that point. If it were as easy to keep millions, as well as create them, the task might not be so highly motivating!

There’s nothing like an economic slowdown and a bear market to bring money goals into perspective. In fact, if money is your only definition of wealth, you’d better fasten your seatbelt. This rough ride is not over in either the economy or the investment markets.

I’ll never forget a billionaire musing to me about the value added by his latest acquisition. He said: “Hell, it could be lollipops. The dollars are just for the counting.” Already having more money than he could spend or enjoy, the wealth-building process was just a way of measuring his stake in the game, his performance against his competitors.

"There's more to wealth than keeping score by counting financial assets."

Much as weight lifters want to press more pounds or swimmers stretch to break world records by milliseconds, those who compete in the world of business and investments strive to add zeros to their balance sheets. It’s a race that starts early, and for some, a race that never ends. Most recently, the focus has been on youthful accumulation of wealth. Google co-founders Sergey
Brin and Larry Page are under 40 and each is worth more than $18 billion. They’re still working at it—an inspiration to countless entrepreneurs.

But is the accumulation of wealth ever finished? Few billionaires throw in the towel and quit. Sure, Bill Gates is devoting his life to being charitable, but he’s still deeply committed to the continued growth of Microsoft.

Rupert Murdoch, approaching 80, continues to expand his media empire, though Forbes estimated his net worth at $8.3 billion in 2008. Kirk Kerkorian, 91, is ranked No. 41 on the list of global billionaires with an estimated $16 billion net worth. Last year he lost billions on his shares of Ford and MGM. But he’s still in the game as Las Vegas’ largest casino owner by room count. Or by lollipops!

There’s more to wealth than keeping score by counting financial assets. Any one of these wealthy people would trade their wealth for good health. Just ask billionaire Mike Milken, who has famously invested his fortune to find a cure for prostate cancer, from which he suffered.

Obviously, not all your wealth is in the form of countable assets. For some, it’s fame. For others, it’s family. John Travolta would surely trade his fame and fortune if he could have saved the life of his teenage son.

After a certain point, some find their wealth becomes merely a tool to be used on behalf of others. They turn to global projects like curing disease or feeding starving children in Third World countries. Warren Buffett joined Bill Gates in his global philanthropic endeavors. Oprah has endowed a school in Africa and countless projects in America.

The one thing money cannot buy is time. That’s a humbling thought. Which is the most precious asset: time or money? Fortunately, life doesn’t require us to make a decision for one or the other—only to balance them wisely.

In the past year, many wealthy people have come in for a rude shock. Real estate and stock market values collapsed. Financial institutions like Lehman and Bear Stearns have wiped out fortunes that were once taken for granted. Bernard Madoff is accused of stealing the assets of charitable foundations and retirees who considered themselves wealthy, or at least comfortable.

The wealth is gone, the people remain. For many, it’s too late to start over. Others are too dispirited to attempt the climb again. Yet, one way or another all will survive. And in the losing of wealth comes greater perspective. The lessons that cost the most, teach the most. Wealth is tough to achieve and even more difficult to maintain.

Human nature teaches that we will continue to strive for success, for wealth, for accomplishment. In that regard, today’s economic problems create the opportunities for tomorrow’s wealth creation.

Americans are fortunate to live in a free-enterprise system that promises—and almost always provides—equality of opportunity. But America has never guaranteed equal results. That is the definition of socialism, a system that has been tested to death around the world.
American success stories are motivated by aspiration, not by guilt. It’s not our style to play the politics of envy, attempting to take away all the rewards of success. Instead, we’re inspired by the achievements of others. Successful people become role models for others. That is perhaps America’s greatest gift—the ability to inspire and offer hope for others within a system that rewards creativity.

So look forward, not back, in your quest for wealth. And be sure to give yourself broad-enough definitions of success and wealth to recognize your accomplishments as well as the time to appreciate them.

**Spotlight**

**February is American Heart Month**

*By Robin Seitz*

Cardiovascular diseases, including stroke, are our nation's No. 1 killer. A healthy diet and lifestyle are the best weapons you have to fight heart disease. It is important to remember that it is the overall pattern of the choices you make that counts. As you make daily food choices, base your eating pattern on these recommendations.

- Choose lean meats and poultry without skin and prepare them without added saturated and trans fat.
- Select fat-free, 1% fat, and low-fat dairy products.
- Cut back on foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils to reduce trans fat in your diet.
- Cut back on foods high in dietary cholesterol. Aim to eat less than 300 mg of cholesterol each day.
- Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt. Aim to eat less than 2,300 mg of sodium daily (less than 1,500 mg if you are in a high risk group for high blood pressure).
- If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation (no more than one drink per day if you're a woman and two drinks per day if you're a man).

Choosing to add physical activity to your daily life is another important step to preventing heart disease. Current guidelines for adults suggest doing a minimum of 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity, or 1 hour and 15 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or combinations of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. To determine your activity level, try the talk test. If you are able to carry on a conversation comfortably while still exercising, you are exercising at a moderate intensity. If you cannot carry on a conversation comfortably, you are exercising at a vigorous intensity.

Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, and preferably spread throughout the week.

For more information about keeping your heart healthy contact Robin Seitz, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Agent at 910-455-5873 or robin_seitz@ncsu.edu