

Wedding Gowns

With proper care, your wedding gown will remain a well-preserved keepsake.

Your wedding gown is one of your most precious possessions. It is a symbol of an important event in your life and, as such, should be treated with special care. Whether you are borrowing it from a relative or buying it new, your gown deserves your attention, both before the wedding and afterward.

Today's bridal gowns are made from a wide variety of fabrics. The gown you have selected may be silk, satin, taffeta, chiffon, organza, brocade, and lace, and accented with delicate trims, such as beads, crystals, sequins, embroidery, silk flowers, and appliqué, all of which require special care.

It is important you select an experienced and professional cleaner to care for your gown after the wedding.

The cleaner will inspect your gown carefully and discuss problems or concerns you may have before cleaning and preparation of the gown for safekeeping. It is suggested that the cost of professional cleaning be included as part of your wedding budget.

Wearing an heirloom can make your special day that much more memorable. Allow at least a month for professional care as well as any alterations. Typically older gowns need more attention than newer ones because many fabrics naturally yellow with age and old stains may not respond to professional treatments. Before you decide to wear a cherished heirloom, allow your professional cleaner to assess and discuss the pros and cons with you.

After the wedding whether having worn a new gown or a cherished heirloom, most brides want to preserve their gown as the most outwardly visible symbol of that special moment in time as well as perhaps preserving the opportunity for their own daughter to wear on her wedding day. That's why it is important to allow a professional cleaner to clean and repair rips and tears as soon as possible and before storing.

Stains cause fibre damage and become more difficult to remove the longer they remain on the fabric. You may think your gown has no stains and is okay to put away without cleaning. Don't do it. Food and beverage stains (perhaps not even immediately visible), body oils, and make-up, if not carefully addressed as soon after the big day as possible may prove impossible to safely remove even by skilled professionals.

Your gown requires specific cleaning instructions and special care.

The ACCC's Care Label Rule requires your gown to have accurate care instructions addressing all parts of the gown, including decorative trim, beads, and sequins. We strongly advise you to examine the care label before purchasing your gown to make sure you understand the care instructions.

If you have a question, ask a professional drycleaner before you buy the gown. Gowns that fail to withstand the prescribed care procedure must be dealt with at the retail level.

Tips for preserving that special lifetime moment.

After your gown has been professionally cleaned the following steps are suggested for maintaining your gown in pristine condition.

- If you are storing the gown on a hanger the straps should be sewn to the waistline to relieve pressure on the shoulders from the weight of the skirt. Although you will receive the gown encased in protective plastic, DIA recommends that you remove the plastic, stuff the bodice with white, acid-free tissue paper, and wrap the dress in a protective white sheet or unbleached muslin covering.
- If you have selected storage in a specially constructed gown box, your treasure will already have been carefully stuffed with white, acid free, unbuffered tissue paper to prevent wrinkles. Headpieces, without metal wire frames or coloured flowers can be stored with the gown.
- Headpieces, veils, shoes, programs, glasses, foam shoulder pads, and bra cups should be removed and stored individually and separately from the gown to avoid colour changes and damage to the gown's fabric.
- Store the gown in a cool, dry location. Basements and attics are not good choices because basement dampness can cause mildew and attic heat could promote yellowing of the fabric.
- The goal of any storage method is to slow down the aging process. Unfortunately, no process or storage method can absolutely guarantee against yellowing or possible deterioration of fabrics.
- Some premium drycleaners offer a museum style storage system involving storing gowns in a specially constructed storage box which allows storage in a vacuum with an inert gas which greatly reduces the potential for yellowing and deterioration of the fabric.