

## ***Clothing Stain Removal Tips***

### **THE BASICS**

- 1. TAKE QUICK ACTION** – The sooner a stain is treated the better. Time can “set” stains. Almost any stain can be removed if action is taken quickly enough, however almost any stain will become permanent if left untreated too long. Ideally, all stains should be treated within the first 24 hours.
- 2. BLOT & SCRAPE** – Whenever possible, immediately after the stain occurs, blot up any excess liquid with a paper towel or clean white cloth. Scrape solids from the fabric if the stain is dry. Try to remove as much excess as possible before further stain treatment.
- 3. DO NOT APPLY HEAT** – Do not apply heat of any kind to stained fabric. Heat can “set” stains. Before ironing, pressing, or drying a garment in a dryer, check to make sure that the fabric is completely free of stains. If you don’t know the origin of a stain, don’t use hot water. Hot water can set protein stains such as blood, egg, and milk stains.
- 4. TEST THE FABRIC** – Before attempting to remove a stain, test the stain removal agent on an inside seam or hidden area of the garment to make sure it doesn’t damage the fabric. Sometimes the stain removal agent may damage the fabric more than the stain itself.
- 5. READ CARE LABELS** – Garment manufacturers are required to attach a “care label” inside the garment, usually at the back of the neckline or at the waistline, indicating the recommended cleaning method. Read the garment care label carefully. The recommendations are based on the fabric, trim, elastic, interfacing, or adhesives. If garments are labelled “dry-clean only” don’t attempt to remove stains from them yourself, take it to your trusted dry cleaner. If garments are labelled “washable”, it may be possible to remove stains from them yourself. Many natural fabrics, such as silk, wool, linen, leather, suede, and fur garments must usually be dry-cleaned.
- 6. DRY-SIDE vs WET-SIDE** – Stains can be divided into two main groups, dry-side and wet-side. Wet-side stains are water-based. Consequently, it takes some form of water to remove these stains. Examples of wet-side stains include soft drinks, milk, ice cream, wine, coffee, tea, mustard, grass, and most food stains. Dry-side stains are oil based. Special dry cleaning fluids or powders are needed to remove these stains. Examples of dry-side stains include rouge, mascara, foundation, ballpoint ink, rubber base adhesives,

cooking oils and greases, oil and tar, candle wax, and salad oil and dressing. There are also "combination stains" that dissolve partially in cleaning fluid and partially in water. Lipstick is an example of this. It contains wax and dye. When treating combination stains always use the dry-side stain removing agents before you use the wet-side stain removing agents. Other examples of combination stains are shoe polish, gravy, paint, and salad dressing.