Summer is here and with it comes those pesky summertime stains that ruin your clothes. I thought today we might talk about saving money by cleaning up stains. Remember, after applying a stain remedy, be sure to check the item before drying. The heat from the dryer will set the stain. So, repeat any recommendations until all signs of the stain are gone before putting it into the dryer.

**Baked beans, barbeque sauce or catsup:** All these taste great on the plate, but can be a big problem on the front of your new shirt. Working from the back of the stain, flush it with cold water. Next, pretreat it with a liquid laundry detergent, tamping with a soft brush to break up the stain. Rinse well. Then sponge with white vinegar and rinse again. Repeat, treating the stain with liquid detergent, then with white vinegar until you’ve removed as much stain as possible. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover and launder with bleach that’s safe for the fabric.

**Berries:** Juicy berries can leave hard-to-remove stains on fabric. Though I usually say use cool water on stains to avoid setting them with heat, this is the exception. Stretch the stained cloth over a bowl or pot in the sink. Hold a kettle of boiling water at least 12 inches above the fabric and pour the water through the stain. The mark should disappear. If not, sponge it with rubbing alcohol before tossing the item into the machine to wash.

**Butter:** What good is corn on the cob unless it’s slathered with butter? For stains that make their way off your fingers and onto your clothes, pretreat with a prewash stain remover and launder, using the hottest water that’s safe for the fabric.

**Grass:** Grass stains are a mixture of protein and other organic matter and mixed with grasses’ juices that form a dye. The major difficulty is the green chlorophyll combined with xanthophylls and carotenoids pigments are so similar to natural fibers like cotton, the grass stain actually penetrates and bonds to the fabric fibers. To remove grass stains, use a liquid detergent and pour directly onto the grass stain. Massage the detergent into the stain. Let the detergent sit for about 10–15 minutes. Wash the item as normal. If the stain isn’t gone, take a sponge and wet the grass stain with rubbing alcohol. Let it air dry.
Rinse it again with cool water. Work some liquid detergent into the stained area. Rinse with cold water. Let it air dry and then wash the item as you normally would.

**Mayonnaise:** Pretreat with a prewash stain remover and then launder, using the hottest water that’s safe for the fabric.

**Mud:** What is summer without a little mud and muck? Let mud stains dry, then brush to remove the soil. Soak in a solution of 1 quart warm water, 1 teaspoon liquid dish detergent and 1 tablespoon white vinegar for 15 minutes. Rinse with water. Let stand for several minutes. If stain remains, sponge with rubbing alcohol, rinse with clear water and launder. Add chlorine bleach to laundry if safe for fabric.

**Mustard:** Flush under cold water to loosen the stain, and then pretreat with a prewash stain remover. Launder, using the hottest water that’s safe for the fabric. Also, add bleach to the wash — preferably chlorine bleach. Check the care label to see if it is safe for the fabric.

**Soft drinks:** Sponge the stain with cool water or soak it in cool water for about 30 minutes. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover. Launder; if safe for the fabric, add chlorine bleach to the wash.

**Watermelon:** These stains fall into that mysterious category of “invisible stains.” The drips dry up and the stain seems to disappear. But if left over time, the stains will oxidize into pale yellow or brown stains. To keep this from happening, launder the item in the hottest water that’s safe for the fabric.

**Wine:** Sponge the stain with cool water or soak it in cool water for about 30 minutes. Pretreat with a prewash stain remover. Launder; if safe for the fabric, add chlorine bleach to the wash.

Now, if you have another stain that I haven’t talked about, give me a yell and I’ll be glad to visit with you about it.

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