

Laundry now a science

Washday blues never fade

By LINDA TAYLOR
Washday blues have survived the 20s, the 40s and the 60s, wringer washers, clotheslines and the white shirt era.

Today, washday blues come more often as we wash clothes more easily but more frequently in modern automatics. Today's homemaker — man or woman — wonders about polluting the waters with phosphate detergents, keeping synthetic whites from greying and avoiding static cling.

Lynn Raasch, consumer information specialist with Johnson

Wax, makers of several laundry products, visited the area recently to offer suggestions on simplifying washday. To remind us of how far we've come, she carried an old-fashioned agitator that women used to clean clothes in large metal washtubs. They stirred and agitated the clothes with a metal, funnel-shaped device on the end of a long broomstick-like pole.

"IT IS a science to do laundry today," she said. "You need to know the basic principles: do I want a phosphate, do I want liquid

or granule detergent, what does an enzyme soak do and what are the three types of fabric softeners and their differences?"

According to Ms. Raasch, liquid non-phosphates are better detergents than granule non-phosphates. In hard water, phosphate detergents yield better-looking clothes. And, she said, baby clothes with a flame-retardant finish should be washed in a phosphate detergent to retain the flame-retardant capabilities. Labels reflect this.

While ecology-minded persons often insist on non-phosphates, Ms. Raasch insists that phosphates help clothes look better because without phosphates in the wash water, clothes get a soap scum, a mineral deposit from the water which resembles bathtub ring.

ONE THING that today's laundry has in common with yesterday's is sorting, the number one laundry basic. According to Ms. Raasch, the answer to a frequently asked question — how can I keep synthetics white — is wash white synthetics, especially foundation garments, separately.

"White nylon will pick up color hanging in the closet," she said. The number of laundry products on the market is ever increasing as consumers find new needs.

One product that Grandma didn't have is fabric softener. There are three types: final rinse, wash water and dryer. In general,

explained Ms. Raasch, the pink ones are diluted and the blue ones are concentrated.

"Softeners coat fabrics to prevent static electricity, caused by synthetics," she said. But she added that some dryer sprays can cause problems with the dryer, including ruining the paint on the drum and causing buildup on the lint filter. Some new machines bear a warning against using such products.

ONE CONTINUAL laundry problem is frizzing. Again, sorting clothes is an answer, and using a fabric softener and plenty of detergent to keep the soil in suspension also helps, said Ms. Raasch.

She also explained that if laundry is done properly, ironing can be kept to a minimum with today's wrinkle-resistant fabrics. Such fabrics and all synthetics need a gradual decreasing of temperature to prevent wrinkling.

"Warm water is still preferred for washing, especially if you use a granule detergent. And warm water isn't that much more costly than cold," she said. "Whites also stay whiter with warm water. The rinse can be cold; in fact, that is preferable."

With new products and laundry conveniences, more and more fabrics can be machine washed, using a delicate cycle. And according to Ms. Raasch, cost of a garment is not always indicative of its washability. Lesser expensive washables are often as easily taken care of as more costly ones.

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This column describing needs in Oakland County is co-sponsored by the Junior League of Birmingham and the Oakland County Volunteer Bureau. Inquiries regarding volunteer needs listed here should be made to the Oakland County Volunteer Bureau at 642-7272. Requests for volunteer listings should also be made through the volunteer bureau.

GATEWAY CRISIS CENTER, Madison Heights, provides crisis counseling for emotional problems. Volunteers are needed to answer the crisis telephone and staff the center from 7 to 11 p.m. Thirty hours of training are provided in a weekend session. Volunteers work four-hour evening shifts every week or every other week. Volunteers are also needed to do clerical work at the center. A legal clinic is held from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday. Attorneys willing to donate their time

are needed as well as volunteer helpers to assist with the clinic. Training is provided.

MICHIGAN HEART ASSOCIATION, Birmingham, needs volunteers to help wrap and package Christmas cards and do office work. Volunteers are also needed for the Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation Program. On-the-job training is provided. Working shifts are from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 1 to 4 p.m.

MICHIGAN HEART ASSOCIATION, Southfield, needs volunteers to book films and literature, assist with the Speakers Program and help with the Cardiac Pulmonary Resuscitation Program. The office is open from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Volunteer hours are flexible.

Parachutists sought

The Wayne State University Parachuting club is seeking new members. The club schedules jumps at 9:30 a.m. every Sunday at Richmond Airport in Gregory. For further information contact Steve Fellows at 368-4690.

Volunteers needed

The Arnold Home Auxiliary in Detroit needs volunteers to man the gift shop, dining room and floor service. Interested persons may call the home on Seven Mile Road in Detroit.

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