

## TIPS FOR CLEANING UP COMMON HOLIDAY MESSSES IN YOUR NEW HOME



### Love Holiday Company But Not The Stains They Leave Behind?

It's your first holiday in your new home and you are excited to show it off to family and friends, but fear the messes they may make! Whether it be polishing the silver, dusting off ornaments, artificial trees and wreaths, or simply making up guest rooms with fresh linens, there is much to do to prepare - let alone worrying about what may happen during the festivities and what you may find after!

Don't worry about your brand new carpet, your new furniture or linens - Instead, have peace of mind and enjoy this special time of year with these tips for cleaning up common holiday messes.

Wine, lipstick, and wax are a year round issue, however Christmas tree sap, cranberry sauce, and gravy are unique to this time of year. We'll attack these stains head on and keep your new home looking its best with the following tips!

#### **Tip 1: Scrape & Blot First**

One common rule of thumb with most any stain is to scrape away any excess and then blot, not scrub, especially on fabric and carpeting. Removing as much excess material will help you avoid creating more of a mess to clean up.

#### **Tip 2: Choose Gentle, but Effective Cleaners**

There are many commercial products available, however some simple make at home options are available and proven effective. Consumer Reports offers these concoctions:

##### **Homemade Detergent Solution**

1 teaspoon of a mild clear or white dishwashing liquid without bleach in 1 cup of warm water

#### **Vinegar Solution**

$\frac{1}{3}$  cup of white vinegar with  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of water.

With both, blot with water and if a trace remains, dab with 3 percent-strength hydrogen peroxide.

*Remember to try any cleaning method on an inconspicuous spot and follow any product care instruction that apply as stated on the label.*

### **Tip 3: Get Specific with Your Stains**

There are a lot of ways to keep your new home clean, but sometimes the most effective processes come from knowledge! There is a science behind cleaning things like tree sap, gravy, and cranberry sauce. Like rinsing blood stains with cold water, not hot water, each of these stains has very specific methods to be effective.

#### **Tree Sap**

There are a few tricks - harden it, dry it or break down its stickiness!

To harden sap, try dry freezing it with an ice cube by simply letting the cube melt over the stain and harden. This will make it easier to scrape excess sap away.

Alcohol will also dry the sap making it easier to scrape and remove. Moisten a paper towel or soft uncolored cloth with rubbing alcohol and blot at sap. If you don't have rubbing alcohol, you can use hand sanitizer, but make sure it is not alcohol-free. Make sure to rotate to a clean part of the cloth so as not to reapply the sap back in the carpet.

Dishwashing detergent massaged into the soiled area with a warm cloth has also proven effective. Clean off the detergent with water and blot dry with towels.

To reduce "stickiness" from sap, you can employ great natural applications. Peanut butter, mayonnaise, and cooking oil all help break down the sticky material so you can wash it all away. Since these are oily, use them carefully and sparingly so as not to make another stain.

#### **Gravy**

Gravy stains are a combination of greasy and creamy so you need to soften the starch to remove it. The number one rule with fabrics is to treat the stain as soon as possible and apply cleaning methods prior to laundering. Also, do not put them in the dryer until the stain is completely removed. In all cases, immediately scrape off the excess gravy.

If you've just started dinner and have a splash of gravy on your table cloth, don't feel the need to strip the table immediately. You can shake a bit of salt or baking soda on the spill or after the excess is wiped away, blot with club soda. Then, right after the table is cleared, remove and soak in cold water for several hours, which helps loosen the gravy and gives you time to put leftovers away and have pie.

Once you are able to work on the stain, try gently rubbing the stain with a small drop of liquid dishwashing soap and then rinse thoroughly. Pretreat the spot with a laundry spot and stain remover and launder at the highest temp tolerable for the fabric you are washing. Add color safe or chlorine bleach to the wash as appropriate of the item.

Completely rinse any cleaning mixture prior to applying another. Always check the manufacturer's directions before applying any cleaning mixture and test on an inconspicuous corner first.



### **Cranberry Sauce**

A cranberry stain is an acidic tannin stain, so be careful what you use to clean it up. Many stain remover products such as Spray n Wash® and Shout® are high alkaline products. When mixed with the acidic tannins of cranberry, these products will change the chemical structure of the stain and actually make it much more difficult to remove.

Instead, start by removing any excess sauce as quickly as possible. Also grab a white cloth to blot the red stain, being careful not to spread the stain by working from the outside in. Using warm water, liquid dish soap such as Dawn®, and a white cloth, blot the stain, rotating the cloth to a clean part each time. Then blot with a dry white cloth, again rotating it to a clean spot each time. Repeat blotting with the damp cloth and dry cloth until the stain is gone. Other methods include combinations of water, vinegar, and dish soap or even hydrogen peroxide, although be careful as it will remove color from that festive tablecloth.

There are many remedies and secret family recipes for cleaning spills, so during this time of celebration, enjoy your new home with close friends and family without the fear of stains being left behind!