Dust Has Dangers...

Lucille Oak

Iowa State College

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Dust Has Dangers...

By Lucille Oak

Dust is the housewife's greatest enemy. She must fight it continually, for every woman knows if it is seen on her piano or table she will be labeled a slack housekeeper. She may try to hide the tell-tale dust by pulling down the blinds and shutting out the light, but she realizes that dust does accumulate. She sometime must chase it away.

Many, many times the housewife demands in exasperation, "Where does all this dust come from?" Dust is found everywhere. Even the sailors out at sea, many miles from land, must dust their cabins.

In the home dust is blown in from the streets through the doors and windows. It comes from the burning of wood and coal, from the wear and tear of the house itself and its finishes and furnishings, from our own bodies and the clothes that cover them. From all these sources come bits of wood, stone, cotton and hair, a mass of mineral, vegetable and animal matter of very complex composition.

In addition to the dead material in the dust which makes it undesirable in the home, there are many living organisms, bacteria, yeasts and molds. It is these little living plants in the dust which should concern the housewife most.

The bacteria are the smallest of these organisms. They have a wide range of activities to perform, depending on the species to which they belong. Bacteria are so small that it is estimated that in the space occupied by a grain of sugar there might be packed six hundred million of them and each bacterium be comfortable. These organisms may perform tasks which are beneficial to the housewife. One species makes possible the setting of flux; others cause fermentation processes essential in the making of dyestuffs; some produce desirable flavors in cheese and take part in butter-making by "ripening" or souring the cream from which the butter is made. Vinegar is made from cider by bacterial action.

Many harmful species of bacteria, however, grow on most foods, and, if the conditions are favorable for their growth, will produce various types of spoilage with which all housewives are familiar. Some of these bacteria thrive on meat juices, others in milk, some in starchy foods, some in sugary solutions, while still others like fats best. These bacteria are not too particular. If their favorite food is not at hand, they will adapt themselves to something else. Souring of milk is one of the most common types of food spoilage produced by bacteria.

Cold retards the growth of most bacteria. If milk is kept cold and particular care is taken to keep out the dust with its bacteria, it will stay sweet much longer. High temperatures will kill bacteria. Pasteurized milk depends on this principle to make it safer for use and to prolong its keeping quality. Care must be taken, however, to prevent the entrance of more bacteria into the milk after pasteurization.

Another type of organism found in milk is the mold. Molds will thrive in practically the same conditions as bacteria. Various kinds of molds produce desirable flavors in cheese and are very useful. Other molds are responsible for the growth found on jelly, pickles and bread. Molds thrive best in damp places. Care should be taken to keep bread and cake boxes well aired and as dry as possible. Mildew on cloth is also caused by the growth of molds which have collected on the cloth from the dust. The mold must be killed to stop its growth on the cloth. If it has grown only on the surface of the cloth the stain may sometimes be removed by bleaching. If the mold has grown there a long time the fiber will probably be weakened and a hole will appear in a short time.

A variety of living plants found in the dust is the yeast. Yeasts concern the housewife primarily in leavening dough for making bread. Yeast requires food, oxygen, warmth and moisture for growth, all of which conditions are supplied in bread dough. Sugary solutions are especially liked by the type of yeasts which grow in the bread dough and cause it to rise. This type is a specially cultivated form of brewer's yeast, which is used in bread-making rather than the yeasts found in small numbers in the air.

A temperature above 150 degrees Fahrenheit will kill the yeast plant. That is why cooks are warned not to pour hot or boiling water over the yeast cake. Baking the bread will kill most of the yeasts and bacteria, if the baking process is continued long enough to thoroughly bake the interior of the loaf. Their action is no longer needed after the rising process.

The housewife should realize that there are many friendly bacteria, molds and yeasts, and that a few are enemies and should be guarded against. In general, the harmful bacteria, including many which cause disease, are brought into the house in the dust. Getting rid of the dust is one of the big problems of housekeeping.

In order to rid the house of dust most successfully, sweeping should be done in such a way as to raise as little dust as possible into the air. Dusting should not immediately follow sweeping. Wait until the dust has settled, and make the dusting a process by which the dust is actually taken out of the room and house, not merely stirred up and thrown back into the air. Cleanliness cannot be achieved until the dust has been removed.

Greater emphasis on proper cleaning of the home, and greater emphasis on personal cleanliness will help the housewife to combat the harmful organisms found in dust.

Keep 'Em for Kids

"A house should have a cookie jar. For when it's half past three, And children hurry home from school As hungry as can be, There's nothing quite so splendid In filling children up, As spicy, fluffy ginger cake And sweet milk in a cup. A house should have a mother Waiting with a hug, No matter what a boy brings home, A puppy or a bug. For children only loiter When the bell rings to dismiss, If no one's home to greet them With a cookie or a kiss."

—Helen Wilkinson.

Does your kitchen table have a cookie jar? A gay, green cookie jar with kollyhocks to smile at you will brighten up your kitchen and polish up your thoughts?

Jane and Tom will be delighted to know just where cookies are kept. They will love the delightful surprises which await their eager fingers as they search the smooth crockery jar.

Perhaps there'll be sugar cookies cut like ducks or bunnies, or maybe there'll be a tiny yellow chicken, or a cookie man with a chocolate covering.

Mother can buy these cookie cutters at the dime store at a real bargain—five cents apiece!

The gayest, crockery cookie jar one can buy for less than a dollar. It is good sized, too, like cookie jars should be, and mothers who have used them say they are a kitchen necessity.

Perhaps there is a health rule which states, 'Do not eat between meals,' but, poor rule, it is violated between 3:30 and 5 p.m.! What tastes better after school than a crisp sugar cookie and a glass of milk? Real enjoyment, relaxation and satisfaction result from knowing Mother's cookies are waiting at home for a boy or a girl.