

Computer Data-Based Programs for Apparel, Textiles, and House Surfaces

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Consumers have two major concerns in maintenance and repair of apparel, textiles and home surfaces: extending wear life and appearance; and using care procedures that are environmentally responsible. In order to address these concerns an interdisciplinary team of NCCES specialists with assistance from the North Carolina Museum of Art developed **HEMECARE** and **HEMECARE 2**. These are easily accessible research-based computer programs designed to answer consumers' questions regarding care and maintenance problems with attention given to environmental concerns. In an era of scarce resources, these computer programs provide a cost efficient means for responding to consumers' concerns, with research based information and solutions.

The objectives for developing these data-based programs were:

1. To provide easily accessible research-based solutions to spot and stain problems on apparel, textile and exterior/interior house surfaces.
2. To provide easily accessible research-based education, options and solutions to consumers' maintenance and repair problems on apparel, textile and exterior/interior house surfaces.
3. To enhance agent capacity for responsiveness to consumer needs by utilizing computer technology.

HEMECARE

HEMECARE offers solutions to over 500 spot and stain problems on apparel and house surfaces. The user can select from four categories of Spot/Stain Problems:

Cosmetic/Hygiene, Food/Beverage, Household/Chemical, and other. There are also three surface categories for the user to choose: Apparel/Fabric, Interior Household, Exterior Household.

The solutions are arranged in order of simplicity, effectiveness and use of non-toxic cleaning products. An extensive glossary of terms and cautions is provided.

HOME CARE was revised in 1996 as a result of changing research and availability of products to consumers. One such example of change occurred in 1995 when manufacturers of drycleaning solvents ceased the production of those containing trichloroethylene. Products with other chemicals were tested for their effectiveness in cleaning oil-based stains and new examples were included in the solutions. The original version is still available via GOPHER, using the following address: gopher://gopher.ces.ncsu.edu:70/77/.wais/homecare. The revised version is currently being programmed for the World Wide Web. It's on-line debut will occur in the summer of 1996.

Below is an example of the spot and stain removal response one will find in HOME CARE.

Category - Apparel/Fabric

PROBLEM: CANDY/NON-CHOCOLATE

1. Sponge stain promptly with cool water. Or soak stain in cool water for 30 minutes or more. Work undiluted liquid detergent into stain and rinse. If stain remains, use a bleach safe for fabric.
2. Following directions on label, dampen the stained area with a commercial pre-wash spot and stain remover. Apply a paste of sodium per borate bleach and water to the area. Wash in warm to hot water using a heavy-duty detergent.

CAUTIONS:

- *Always read your care label before trying any stain removal method. Do not use any products or procedures prohibited by the care label.*
- Always pretest each cleaning agent on an inconspicuous area first to determine colorfastness.
- When using caustic or commercial cleaning solutions, be certain to provide for adequate ventilation.

HEMECARE 2

HEMECARE 2 focuses on the maintenance and repair of textile and house surfaces and offers solutions to over 200 maintenance and repair problems. It has been available via World Wide Web since April, 1995 and can be accessed at <http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/homecare2/data/hc2.html>. The user can find answers to problems in four areas: Apparel/Textiles, House Furnishings, Interior Surfaces, and Exterior Surfaces. In addition to providing maintenance and repair solutions for garments, carpets, furniture, etc., the program addresses four special problem areas: Odors, Fire/Smoke Damage, Wind/Storm Damage, and Storage. A separate section discusses the preservation of textile and apparel heirlooms. Depending on the specific problem, the solutions may include recommendations for: cleaning/maintenance, repairing/replacing, and recommendation on doing it yourself or hiring a professional cleaning or maintenance.

Below is an example of the type of response one will find in HEMECARE 2.

Category: Interior Surfaces

PROBLEM: WALLS AND CEILINGS - PEELING WALLPAPER

To repair peeling wallpaper or loose edges, apply paste to the underside of paper and press it back into place. Do not use too much paste. If you use too much, it will soak through the paper and leave a stain. A thin, even layer about the thickness of a sheet of notebook paper will do. Remove excess paste with sponge and water being sure not to soak the wallpaper and loosen the paste behind the wet spot. Use a smoothing brush and seam roller to press paper smoothly to the wall. A sponge and straight-edge ruler or a rolling pin can substitute.

This is a do-it-yourself job or hired.

SIMPLE TEARS

They can be repaired in a similar manner. If it is the peeling sort of tear that gets larger and larger, peel it up and apply paste to the underside, then press wallpaper back into place so the edges of the tear match as closely as possible.

This is a do-it-yourself job or hired.

NOTE: Wallpaper can be repaired with library paste, flour-and-water paste, or white glue. Use white glue for vinyl wallpaper.

CAUTIONS:

- Working with water or other liquids may cause slippery conditions on flooring.
- You may want to cover floor with newspapers or a drop cloth.
- Have plenty of light and ventilation.

Impacts of Using HOMECARE and HOMECARE 2

Extension field faculty have benefited by having these readily accessible resources. Extension Agents in North Carolina indicate that the computer programs have enhanced their effectiveness and efficiency in responding to consumer questions. The computer programs have also served as a self-teaching tool for new field faculty by increasing their proficiency in care, maintenance and repair of apparel, textiles and exterior/interior house surfaces. Twenty out of 50 states within the Cooperative Extension System are using HOMECARE and HOMECARE 2 as resources for their field faculty. Consumers have benefitted from the research-based information and the quick response time allowing them to solve maintenance problems quickly and effectively with nominal cost. Records indicate that HOMECARE 2 has been accessed directly by consumers in over 20 foreign countries including Denmark, Canada, Japan and Australia.

[HOMECARE](#)[HOMECARE 2](#)**Authors**

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