



Mimi's Handbook for Dollmakers

Cleaning Your Doll

by Gloria J. "Mimi" Winer

Chocolate Kisses

There is no known way to remove chocolate kisses. Don't eat chocolate while you work.

Blood Spots

Blood spots are inevitable. Sticking a needle into your fingers seems to be the price you pay for making a doll that comes alive. Wash off immediately with a damp sponge and cool water. Then dry with a hair dryer so it won't water spot.

Your own saliva will erase your own blood from fabric. (The enzymes are the same.)

General Cleaning

Sandy Burke uses the following method to clean her dolls before final finishing:

- Lay the doll on top of a clean towel.
- Prepare a solution of cold water and a mild detergent such as Ivory, Palmolive, or Woolite.
- Use a soft cloth. Dip it into the detergent and squeeze out the excess. Wipe off the entire doll. Use as dry a cloth as will work. Keep the doll as dry as possible.
- Dry quickly with a hair dryer to avoid water spots.
- If doll is still dirty, use an old toothbrush (cleaned) and gently scrub the doll with the detergent solution. Keep the doll as dry as possible.
- If the detergent doesn't work, most stubborn stains can be removed with laundry prewash such as Clorox brand prewash (not bleach) Always test on a scrap of fabric first. Keep the doll as dry as possible.

Machine Washing

If you have small children, it would be a good idea to make a machine washable doll. Use one of the hot glued or sewn hair styles with machine washable nylon yarn rather than the craft fur wig. Craft fur doesn't wash well in the machine, and the glue used to hold it on is not waterproof.

If you have foot plates in the doll to make it stand up without a stand, be sure to make them of plastic and not cardboard.

To machine wash the doll do the following:

- Undress the doll and spray it with Spray 'n Wash.
- Put the leg of an old pair of panty hose over the doll's hair and face to protect them.
- Put the doll in a pillowcase and tie it closed.
- Wash on gentle cycle in cold water with Ensure or Orvus. (These are new products, better than Woolite, available in quilt shops.)
- Dry in the pillowcase on warm. It may take several hours. Do not squeeze or wring the doll to remove water—it will ruin the doll.

Be certain that the doll is completely dry. If it is still wet in the center, the moisture will eventually creep to the surface and stain the doll.