



Old Wives' Tales

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Old wives' tales are probably as old as language itself. Often, an old wives' tale is when one person tells some one else why or how something happened and that information is passed

on to another person, then another, and another, etc. Before long, the story is treated as truth, even if it is false.

Old wives' tales can be regarding just about anything, including carpets. For instance, about 35 years ago, schools around the globe noticed an increase in asthma attacks in children. The culprit blamed for the problem was carpet.

Although there was little scientific evidence, one school administrator suggested carpet was to blame and, just like many other old wives' tales, in time, it was treated as fact.

Even some doctors believed it. In 2003, nearly 60 per cent of U.S. doctors specializing in the treatment of asthma and allergies recommended that patients remove their households' carpets as part of the treatment

for respiratory disease. (Source: Carpet and Rug Institute).

JUST THE FACTS MA'AM

Approximately 10 years ago several published studies disproved the old wives' tale that carpeting could trigger asthma attacks in children. In fact, some studies found that carpeting can actually help *prevent* asthma attacks.

According to the Canadian Carpet Institute, "carpet holds allergen-causing substances tightly and, as a result, keeps them from becoming airborne. [This minimizes] their level in the breathing zone, [which] translates to lower exposure potential." In other words, the carpet fibres hold allergens and prevent them from being released into the air.

The Institute said that carpets should be vacuumed regularly with a high-filtration machine to remove allergens. For cleaning, most experts agree the most effective way to clean carpets is the use of hot water extraction, and preferably a truck mount extraction system.

Although some more advanced portables generate as much as 500 psi and heat water/solution to 100 degrees Celsius (212 degrees Fahrenheit) at the wand tip, a truck mount can generate

more than 1000 psi and much higher temperatures at the wand.

Also, unless the portable has an auto-fill/dump system, it has to be emptied as it fills. Studies indicate this can take as much as 15 minutes each time the work is to be performed. And finally, when the goal is to remove dust mites in carpet and upholstery, a truck mount system releases them outside, into the atmosphere and not within the facility being cleaned.

It is this last feature that is most beneficial when discussing carpets, asthma and health. Truck mounts deep-clean carpet to help maintain healthy, safe carpeted surfaces, which results in better indoor air quality. Carpeting has been proven to protect our health, dismissing any old wives' tales.

Chris Ryan is an engineer and project manager in the HydraMaster Engineering department. He writes an ongoing column called "Chris's Corner" specifically for other service and repair professionals in the carpet cleaning industry. He's been with HydraMaster for 15 years and is currently involved with research and development for the company. He may be reached at chris.ryan@hydramaster.com.

SURVEY:

Carpet Cleaners Do Not Rely on Tweets

Oprah's on it. Actress Demi Moore loves it. Some say it made CNN news commentator Rick Sanchez a star news reporter. But, it does not look like carpet cleaning professionals are finding that much use for it.

A recent survey conducted by U.S. Products, a manufacturer of professional floor, carpet and restoration equipment, found that more than 71 per cent of respondents are not using social media web sites, such as Twitter, Facebook, My Space and others to market their carpet cleaning services.

According to the survey, several carpet cleaning professionals are testing out social media web sites and methods, including:

- Twitter - 43 per cent
- Blogging on various sites - 28 per cent.
- Facebook - 14 per cent.

However, when the respondents who are currently participating in the social media movement were asked about these new marketing methods, nearly 55 per cent indicated they 'can't tell yet' if these efforts are effective sales lead generators. About 18 per cent indicated that they were not effective, however 10 per cent say they did pull in some new customers.

"We also used the survey to see if there were some other trends evolving in the carpet cleaning industry," said Nick Wiebe, market-

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