

How to Wash for Sensitive Skin

For individuals with sensitive skin or multiple chemical sensitivities (MCS), laundry methods matter. Many conventional detergents leave behind residues that can irritate the skin. This simple, low-residue approach helps keep clothing clean while minimizing potential triggers.

A Low-Residue Laundry Method

Rather than relying on traditional detergents, this method uses baking soda and vinegar in separate steps to clean and rinse fabrics effectively without leaving unwanted residues.

Step 1 — Clean (Baking Soda Wash)

- Use 1/2 cup baking soda (sodium bicarbonate)
- Add directly to the drum (not the detergent tray)
- Wash using warm or hot water, depending on fabric
- Run a normal wash cycle

Baking soda helps loosen oils, reduce odors, and clean fabric with minimal residue.

Step 2 — Rinse + Neutralize (Vinegar Rinse)

- Use 1/2 to 1 cup distilled white vinegar
- Add to the fabric softener compartment or during the rinse cycle
- Run a full rinse cycle

Vinegar helps remove any remaining residue, soften the fabric naturally, and dissolve mineral buildup.

Optional Deep Cleaning (When Needed)

Washing Soda (Stronger Cleaning)

- Use 1–2 tablespoons washing soda (sodium carbonate)
- Provides stronger cleaning for oils and buildup
- Ensure thorough rinsing, as it is more alkaline than baking soda

Oxygen Cleaner (Occasional Use)

- Use 1 tablespoon sodium percarbonate (unscented)
- Helps reduce microbes and remove organic stains
- Use only occasionally and choose additive-free products

On Cleanliness and Microbes

This method effectively cleans clothing for everyday wear. Baking soda, water, and proper washing action help reduce odor-causing bacteria. Vinegar creates a less favorable environment for microbes. For most uses, this approach provides sufficient cleanliness without leaving irritating residues.

For additional hygiene:

- Wash in warm to hot water when possible
- Dry thoroughly
- Occasionally use an oxygen cleaner if needed

What to Avoid

- Conventional detergents (even 'free & clear')
- Fragrances or essential oils
- Fabric softeners
- Dryer sheets

These can leave residues that may irritate sensitive skin.

A Simpler Approach to Comfort

By simplifying how clothing is washed, many people with sensitive skin find greater comfort. This method supports the natural qualities of cotton fabric—keeping it clean, breathable, and gentle against the skin.