You just finished what feels like the longest work day of your life—endless meetings, tons of deadlines, and one last-minute task that left you totally drained. You barely had time to eat lunch, and what’s more, your commute home sucked more than usual. Now that you’re (finally!) home, all you want to do is jump in bed and curl up in your soft sheets. Not so fast. Depending on how often you wash your sheets, you could (and tbh, probably are) jumping into a cesspool of dead skin, mites, bacteria, fungus, and—believe it or not—fecal matter (a.k.a. poop).

Let that sink in—um, figuratively speaking—for a sec. Now that you’re properly grossed out (sorry not sorry), here’s everything you need to know about **proper** bed hygiene:
How often should you wash your sheets?

At minimum, you should clean your sheets once a week, says Philip M. Tierno, PhD, clinical professor of microbiology and pathology at New York University's Langone Medical Center. (Yes, even if you live by a "No street clothes on the bed" rule.)

The American Academy of Dermatology (ADD) also recommends washing your sheets once a week, but the organization also suggests changing your pillow cases two to three times a week, too.

Do you wash your sheets once a week?

| No... | Yup, it's nbd. |

Do clean sheets = fewer pimples?

"If someone is changing their sheets every other month, that's a problem," says Emmy Graber, MD, dermatologist and President of The Dermatology Institute of Boston. "But can changing your sheets every day versus every week make your skin better? Probably not."

Still, certain people may want to consider throwing a load of sheets in the wash more often than others. "If you sweat a lot at night, you should change your sheets more often than someone who doesn’t," Graber explains. The same, she says, goes for people who tend to drool in their sleep or wear makeup and/or heavy moisturizers to bed. If you're guilty of any of those things (no shame), it's best to wash your sheets at least once a week, but you may need to clean them more frequently if/when they're noticeably dirty.

After cleaning your sheets, here's how to fold them Marie Kondo-style. (You're welcome.)

If washing sheets every week won't improve your skin, why should you do it?
The second—and I mean, the second—you crawl into your sheets, you’re littering them with skin cells (50 million a day!), sweat, makeup, lotions, hair, and anything else you’ve picked up throughout the day, from pollen and pet dander to fungal mold and dirt particles, says Tierno.

All that comes with a not-so-healthy dose of bacteria—sweat can carry fecal matter and E. coli—which will continue to multiply as you postpone washing your sheets.

Both dead skin cells and sweat are also food for dust mites, attracting them to your bed and helping them multiply, says Tierno. While you probably don’t love the idea of cuddling up with some creepy-crawly mites (fair), the bugs themselves are generally harmless. Their poop, on the other hand... that can exacerbate allergies and asthma. Even if you don’t have allergies, it can still cause you to wake up with red eyes and a stuffy nose, he says.

"A lot of people don’t realize that they spend one-third of their life exposed to these allergens," says Tierno. (And that’s not even taking into account the days you spend binge-watching the latest Netflix show in bed.)

**How should you wash your sheets?**

Luckily, you don’t need to go out and buy a special detergent to clean your sheets, explains Graber. So, if it works for your clothes, it’ll work for your bedding.

Of course, if you do want to change your laundry detergent, choosing a hypoallergenic one is a good start, according to Graber.

**But, even if you wash your sheets once a week, your bed could still be kinda nasty.**

Here’s why: Over time, gravity takes over, helping these particles and bacteria to seep into your mattress and pillows, says Tierno.

You might be thinking the only solution is to dump your mattress and pillows, but there’s a way easier—and cheaper—way to prevent bacteria from accumulating. Tierno recommends buying mattress and pillow covers that are “impermeable” and encasing the entire mattress (rather than just covering the top of it). You’ll want to wash these every few months to get rid of any buildup.

And, if nothing else, cleaning your sheets every week will help you feel like you have your sh*t together (instead of in your bed).