

## GEMSTONE CARE AND CLEANING



The beautiful gems set in your jewelry are much harder than the metal they are set in: in fact they are harder than steel. But that doesn't mean that they don't deserve a little pampering now and then. You'll find that regular cleaning will keep your gems looking great. And following a few guidelines when storing and cleaning your jewelry can make sure that its beauty will last for generations.

The best way to clean your transparent crystalline gemstone jewelry is the easiest: fill a bowl, plastic if possible, with warm water. (Using a bowl instead of doing this in the sink ensures nothing goes down the drain.) Add a little dish soap and then scrub gently with a soft brush. A toothbrush or a mushroom brush will work perfectly. Make sure you scrub behind the stones; grime can collect there, especially in rings. Rinse and pat dry with a soft cloth. For transparent crystalline gems, a little ammonia in the rinse water will add extra sparkle but don't add ammonia when cleaning silver, opals, pearls, or any opaque gem.

Pearls, coral, amber, and opaque gemstones like lapis lazuli, turquoise, and malachite should be wiped clean with a damp cloth. These gems are porous and need to be protected from all chemicals, including cleaners, perfume, lotions, and hairspray, which can damage them over time. It's a good idea to remove jewelry when you are putting on makeup or skin care products: the oil can dull the shine of your gems.

With a little care, your gemstone jewelry will last for generations with as much beauty and brilliance as you enjoy today. Ultrasonic cleaners aren't appropriate for many gemstones. Diamonds, ruby, sapphire, Tashmarine, garnets, amethyst, citrine, iolite, chrysoberyl, peridot, and zircon will be fine as long as they aren't highly included but avoid subjecting other gems to the vibrations.

Even very hard gems, including diamond, can be damaged with a sharp blow. Exercise a little common sense during strenuous activity. Gems with an exposed high setting or gems with internal fractures and inclusions are more vulnerable to breakage. Try not to remove rings by pulling on the gem: over time you will weaken the grip that the metal has on the gem and increase the chance it may come loose and be lost.

When you aren't wearing your jewelry, store it separately. Gems can scratch each other or the gold, platinum, or silver they are set in. So don't pile jewelry in a tangled heap in a drawer or jewelry box. Keep each piece in your collection nestled in its own compartment or cradled in tissue paper, cotton or felt.

With a little care, your gemstone jewelry will last for generations with as much beauty and brilliance as you enjoy today. For care and handling tips on individual gems, consult our gem fact files.