

(Advertisement)

# Microfiber Bed Linen: Allergy, Bedsore Relief

*Multiple benefits include improved longevity, faster drying times*

By Robert B. Mishkin



*Sheets made from polyester microfiber fabric like the ones shown above offer a variety of benefits to textile service companies, including comfort, durability (up to 300 washings), light-weight, fast-drying material, a tight weave that won't allow most allergens to pass through and proven potential for reducing bed sores.*

The good news is that Americans are living longer, and in so doing will create increasing demands on our healthcare systems. Even better, this will be expressed in all aspects of the healthcare delivery system. The number and size of hospitals, long-term nursing homes, skilled nursing homes, convalescent homes, extended care and assisted facilities, and some as-yet-undefined "homes," will increase. Environmentalists, social and political scientists, economists, ethicists, moralists, and 'ists' of various stripes will coalesce around these next-generation facilities. Make no mistake—growth in this arena is inevitable. What remains to be seen is by what percentage and in what form.

A common denominator to each of these facilities is the bed. Separating the occupant from the bed is the omnipresent sheet.

Textile service providers stand to be big winners in this. All we need to do is—

provide the *right* service/product, at the *right* price and at the *right* time. Right? Right. Each company in this arena has a different vision or formula for the "Three Rights." The winners in this and for that matter, any industry, are more acutely aware of the Three Rights as they relate to their customers. Understanding these Rights will dictate the product and service to be offered, the price to be charged and the time in which to do it.

## Beyond thread-count wars

Polyester microfiber sheets for these beds could indeed be the right product, at the right time and at the right price. The new-generation poly microfiber sheet has demonstrated its value in the incredibly demanding four- and five-star resort spa industry. Over 90% of the visits to the spa involve the treatment table. And the sheet is the only thing touching the client except for the

hands of the therapist. It's easy to understand how important the feel of the sheet is to the total experience. Not only is this sheet soft and luxurious, it is unbelievably durable and able to withstand the harsh chemicals used to remove massage oils in the laundry process. Although it is 100% poly microfiber, it feels like 600 count cotton. Speaking of thread counts, why all the fuss? Can your customer feel the difference between 300 and 400 TC? The question then is, does thread count? According to many experts, no. Paul Hooker, the head of Sferra was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying, "Thread count is so last century. It really means nothing." Carole Sloan, Founding editor-in-chief, *Home Textile Today* trumpets the end of the thread-count wars.

## Protective cover

Microfiber sheets typically are lighter when

**GET SMART  
WITH TRSA**

# TRSA's Online Digital Library

## Performance Evaluation Program for Route Salespeople

An 8-page manual prepared by TRSA's Sales and Service Subcommittee for route supervisors and service managers. Describes a formal evaluation program to improve on-the-job performance of route salespeople. Based on TRSA's Training Program for Route Salespeople. Includes a sample copy of Route Salesperson's Performance Evaluation Form

You'll also find publications in these industry-specific categories:

- Accounting**
- Dust Control**
- Government Compliance**
- Human Resources**
- Legal**
- Production and Engineering**
- Purchasing**
- Quality**
- Sales/ Service**
- Strategic Management**
- Textile Management**

Resources can be searched by any of these categories or by publication number, keyword or title. The free service is accessible only through TRSA Online and only with a unique corporate ID and password. To get your company's ID and password, e-mail at [dmangual@trsa.org](mailto:dmangual@trsa.org).

**TRSA**  
[www.trsa.org](http://www.trsa.org)

compared to a cotton or cotton/poly sheet— sometimes as much as 50% lighter. This of course translates into more sheets per load. They also dry much faster, saving energy. Add to this, poly microfiber sheets will usually last 300 wash cycles. By most estimates, that's at least twice the life of a cotton or cotton/poly sheet. But weight and durability are only two of the many interests to be satisfied. What about environmental issues? When considering factors encompassed by The Total Environmental Impact (TEI), poly microfiber sheets are perhaps one of the most eco-friendly products on the market today. The current trends in textiles are toward recyclability, energy and resource conservation, and away from simply organic. These trends of course, make sense since we must husband our resources: water, petroleum, land, people, and air to name a few and whenever possible, reuse/recycle products that have already-consumed resources to manufacture them in the first place. To this end, Harmony Recycling ([www.harmonyrecycling.com](http://www.harmonyrecycling.com)) is willing and able to process worn-out sheets.

A rehabilitation hospital using poly microfiber sheets in all its rooms, anecdotally reports they are experiencing an almost 100% reduction in bed sores, an otherwise profound problem for this type of facility. Really, this isn't all that surprising, Precision Fabrics Group states their DermaTherapy® sheets have demonstrated a measureable and scientifically proven reduction in itching experienced by patients sleeping on these sheets. They have also reported overall improvement in skin appearance, improved uninterrupted sleep and an improved level of perceived comfort. Precision Fabric Group received FDA approval for use of this product in the treatment of atopic dermatitis.

Yet another quality of the finely woven poly microfiber sheet is its ability to prevent 90% of the particles in the 3-5 micron range from passing through it (by comparison, the diameter of human hair ranges from 17-100 microns). Allergens produced by dust mites are in this size range and are known to cause allergic reactions. In essence, these sheets form a protective barrier. Both the spa and the healthcare industries are becoming increasingly aware of consumer interest

in performance and luxury.

Dr. Susan Schreiber, medical advisor to Comphy Co. noted in a recent interview that, "One of the most common allergens that we see is from dust mites. Typically, I strongly recommend avoidance as the primary form of treatment. One of the easiest and perhaps best forms of avoidance is creating a protective barrier between the patient and the mattress/pillow. Studies demonstrate that a fitted sheet that does not allow particles larger than six microns to pass through it essentially forms a partial encasing and significantly reduces the dust mite allergen levels."

### Blend of benefits

There are almost always conflicting interests when selecting sheets for a specific customer or industry. No one product can satisfy all demands. For example, it feels great, but it's too expensive. Or, it's organic, but it isn't durable. Or, it's durable, but no one wants to sleep on it. The ability to weigh and balance conflicting interests is the role of management. However, consider the fact that poly microfiber features a unique blend of qualities and characteristics that are well suited to the healthcare industry, including:

- On a cost-per-wash basis it's possibly one of the least-expensive sheets to own
- It's extremely lightweight, thus allowing more sheets per load
- Hydrophobic fiber results in reduced drying time
- Polyester is one of the most readily recyclable fibers
- Testing confirms finely woven fabric forms an allergen barrier; and
- Demonstrated ability to reduce bed sores and improve the sleeping experience.



For more information, contact Robert Mishkin, vice president of marketing and sales for Comphy Co., Los Angeles, at 323/225-8234 or [robert@comphy.com](mailto:robert@comphy.com).