

### STERLING SILVER:

Sterling silver is an alloy of silver containing 92.5% pure silver and 7.5% other metals, usually copper. The first thing to understand is sterling silver tarnishes typically by things that we do or not do and/or wear. Perfume, colognes, lotions, sweaty skin and hair products can all be contributing factors to tarnishing your shiny jewelry. When the jewelry is removed and the residue isn't wiped off, the chemicals will contribute to the tarnishing process. Harsh chemicals from dishwater detergents, chlorine and the like will tarnish sterling silver. If sterling silver is exposed to the air and left unprotected when not being worn, tarnish becomes inevitable.

A few easy steps will ensure your sterling to be as brilliant as the day it was purchased. Before you put any jewelry on, be sure any lotions and/or perfumes are absorbed into your skin. Apply all hair products, especially hair spray, before you put on the jewelry. Remove your jewelry before swimming, an invigorating workout or prior to bedtime. When you remove your jewelry at the end of your day, take a couple of minutes to wipe it off with a jewelry cloth or an old t-shirt. The jewelry cloth is preferable because it's two sided: The inside rouge is for cleaning off the dull residue and the outside cloth is for buffing. Never use tissues or paper towels for cleaning silver. These products will scratch the jewelry, which will detract from the beauty of the pieces.

After the jewelry is wiped clean, store it in an airtight container, such as a zip lock baggie, a cloth bag and/ or an airtight jewelry box. Please be aware that many display units and boxes may contain sulfur, which interacts and tarnishes sterling silver. The less air and light your silver is exposed to when you aren't wearing it, the less tarnish will occur, making it easy to have shiny jewelry each and every time you're ready to wear it. Taking the time to keep your jewelry clean after wearing it and storing it away from light and air is all that's needed to cut down on tarnish significantly.

## GOLD FILLED AND GOLD PLATED:

The term "gold-filled" is a bit of a misnomer. Gold-filled does not have gold in the middle, nor is it a mixture of gold and base metals. Actually, gold-filled is a brass sheet or brass core with a pressure-bonded outside layer of gold to produce the look of gold at a more reasonable price. Gold Plating is a method of depositing a layer of gold onto the surface of sterling silver through an electrochemical process. Nickel is used as a layer between sterling silver and gold to strengthen the bond. Care should be taken when cleaning gold-filled and gold plated jewelry to protect the layer of gold from being worn away or nicked. Do not use abrasive compounds to clean the jewelry.

Although Gold Filled and Gold Plated jewelry will not tarnish, it will get dirty. The oils from your skin transfer to the metal and need to be washed off periodically. The easiest way to care for it is to scrub it with an old soft toothbrush and a mild dish washing liquid. Rinse it well and lay on a towel to dry. Be sure it is completely dry before storing.

Another cause is actual corrosion of the metals. Gold itself does not corrode, but its primary alloys of silver or copper will do so (forming very dark chemical compounds) under moist or wet conditions. When we perspire, it can cause corrosion of the gold, especially when exposed to warmth and air. This problem can be worse in seacoast and semitropical areas, where chlorides combine with perspiration to form a corrosive element that discolors skin. Smog fumes gradually attack jewelry and are evident as a tarnish that rubs off on the skin. We suggest that you remove jewelry often and use an absorbent powder, free of abrasives, on skin that comes into contact with your jewelry.



## KEEP YOUR JEWELRY BEAUTIFUL

#### COMMERCIAL SILVER/GOLD CLEANERS:

read the label, and if in doubt, do not use a chemical cleaner. some gemstones that cannot be placed in commercial cleaners are: pearls, lapis lazuli, malachite, opals, coral and turquoise.

## JEWELRY POLISHING CLOTH OR SUNSHINE CLOTH:

use lightly to restore luster. do not press hard when polishing gold filled or plated jewelry or you will damage the surface.

#### **EASY HOMEMADE SOLUTIONS:**

the best way to clean in places where a polishing cloth can't reach is simple. first take a small bowl that holds about a quart of water and line it with aluminum foil. then, add hot water, a tablespoon of baking soda and stir. place jewelry in the solution for about one minute, rinse clean and let air dry. if you have a build up of dirt in hard to reach places, just put dish washing liquid in a bowl of water and soak over night.

**TARNISH** can be retarded by storing your jewelry in a resealable plastic bag with antitarnish paper. pearls and opals, however, should be stored in fabric instead of plastic because they need to "BREATHE".

AND REMEMBER... irish linen and leather do not like to get wet!

# KEEP YOUR JEWELRY HAPPY

- · protect all jewelry from scratches, sharp blows, chemicals, extreme temperatures, and sunlight.
- after each wearing, gently wipe each piece of jewelry clean of make up and skin oils with a 100% cotton cloth.
- · store jewelry seperately so it doesn't scratch other jewelry.
- remove jewelry when doing household tasks such as gardening, cleaning, household repairs or other strenuous activities.
- apply make-up and hair spray before putting on your jewelry. make-up and hair spray contain chemicals that
  may affect your jewelry.
- do not store jewelry next to heating vents, window sills, or in the car.
- store jewelry away from sunlight. the sun may fade some gemstones.
- do not wear jewelry while in a pool, hot tub or bathing. The chlorine in the water can damage various gemstones
  and metals including gold.
- · always store bead necklaces strung on silk flat because silk stretches over time.
- frequent cleaning is recommended to maintain its true beauty. Salt water, chlorine in swimming pools, soap, perfumes, personal products and perspiration take their toll on all fine jewelry. Wipe your jewelry carefully with a soft cloth to keep it clean and enjoy!