



Girls' hockey wins 3-1 over EGF 8

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### SHOPPING

## Spilling the beans on new technology (without leaving a stain)

BY RICHARD CHIN  
*Pioneer Press*

Go ahead, be a cad.

You can now laugh at any drink thrown in your face because of nanotechnology.

At least that's the promise of a California company called Nano-Tex. It has developed fabric treatment technology that's supposed to make ordinary materials like cotton and silk impervious to spills.

To see if they're right, the company let us try out a couple of pieces of clothing treated by Nano-Tex.

Both the silk necktie by Brooks Brothers and the cotton Gap shirt looked and felt normal, although we don't find those stripes attractive in shirts and the pattern in the tie was pretty ho-hum.

So we didn't feel reluctant to douse both with coffee, red wine, Worcestershire sauce, balsamic vinegar and soy sauce. As promised, the liquids beaded up and rolled off without a trace. The necktie did finally get soggy and dark when we soaked the end in a cup of coffee. But it looked OK when we let it dry out.

Yellow mustard wiped off fine. The tie still smelled a little like a hot dog, but we couldn't see any stain. A big blob of salad dressing, however, proved to be the tie's downfall. A faint oily mark remained after we wiped it off.

The spill-resistant treatment, which is being used by such retailers as Eddie Bauer and Old Navy, works best with liquids like juice, wine and soda, according to Nano-Tex spokeswoman Donna Berry. Oils or foods with a lot of dye in them are tougher to repel, she said.

The treatment uses extremely small particles — Berry called them nano-whiskers — that attach themselves to fabric fibers, which then repel liquids. Berry said the spill-resistant properties should last through 30 to 50 home washings.



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One final observation: If you do get a shirt with Nano-Tex, you might want to consider treated trousers, too. That's because any liquid that hits the shirt will roll off and likely end up on your pants.

Richard Chin can be reached at [rchin@pioneerpress.com](mailto:rchin@pioneerpress.com) or 651-228-5560.