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WHAT ARE THE BEST AIR PURIFIERS AND FILTERS FOR ALLERGIES?

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If you're one of the 60 million people who suffer from allergies, you may be considering purchasing an air purifier to help alleviate

your symptoms. Air purifiers are not considered medical devices and are not FDA regulated. However, they do help clean the air in your home, and cleaner air means fewer allergens to irritate your nose and lungs.

Before purchasing a unit, you can try a few other ways to minimize exposure to allergens. Keep your windows closed and use your AC when it's warm to keep pollen and dust outside. Use a high efficiency pleated HVAC filter in your home to catch dust and other allergens, and change it once a month.

If you have pets and suspect they may be a culprit behind your allergy attacks, think about limiting their time indoors. When they are inside, keep them off the furniture and your bed. Steam clean upholstered furniture and then vacuum it weekly to reduce pet dander.

Consider removing the carpeting from your home. Carpet traps dust, pet dander, and other allergens that trigger allergies. Hardwood or other smooth flooring is easier to keep free of dust and dander.

If you still feel there are allergens in your home causing your symptoms, an air purifier can help keep the air cleaner. The best unit for allergy sufferers is a true HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter purifier. It has a mechanical filter that removes 99.97% of allergens as small as 0.3 microns in size. A micron is 1/25,000 of an inch. The smaller the particle, the more likely it is to trigger allergies, so this type of unit is the best option for people with allergies.

Some manufacturers may claim to be a HEPA unit, but they may not be certified. Make sure the package is labeled that it was manufactured, tested and certified in accordance with HEPA filtration standards.

Air purifiers with a multi-stage filtration system that sends air through the mechanical filter and then through a carbon pre-filter are the best units for allergy sufferers because the air is filtered more than once. If you have pets or smells in your home that trigger your allergies, a unit with an odor controlling natural carbon pre-filter may be an option to consider.

Plan to replace the HEPA filter yearly and the carbon filter every 3-6 months in order to keep it running efficiently. Before making a purchase, check out the prices of the replacement filters to make sure it will fit within your budget.

When purchasing an air purifier, you'll need to consider the size of the room where it will be used. You can get units that filter the air in spaces of 350 up to 800 square feet. The more space it covers, the more expensive the unit will be. In addition, look for a unit that is energy star qualified in order to keep your utility bill from increasing too much. If your sniffing and sneezing doesn't go away immediately, don't think your new air purifier is not doing its job; it takes four to six weeks to feel the effects.

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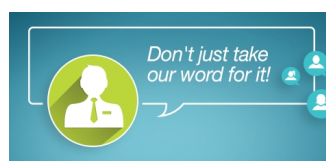
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