

Air conditioning in cars cuts down microbes: study

Air conditioning in cars cuts out more than 80 percent of germs, fungal spores and particles from outside air, providing a boon for people with respiratory problems or allergies, German scientists say.



In a study released at the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ECCMID), a Hannover Medical School team monitored air quality in three cars between five and 10 years old that had been fitted with air conditioning.

The microbiological quality of air showed "an enormous improvement," ranging from 80.5 to 88.7 percent, when the air conditioners were on, the researchers say.

The scientists stress, though, that the test was carried out on cars whose air conditioners had been properly maintained and whose air filters had been changed regularly.

The team recommends car users examine their air conditioning systems as soon as they smell any suspicious odour.

The three cars were a 1998 Volkswagen Passat station wagon that had notched up 110,000 kilometers (68,000 miles); a VW Polo FSI saloon, also called a sedan, built in 2003 which had travelled 10,000 kms (6,000 miles); and a 1997 SEAT Alhambra van, with 175,000 kms (110,000 miles) on the clock.

The research is to be released on Monday, the penultimate day of a four-day conference in Helsinki gathering more than 8,000 experts in virology and microbiology