

Carpeting is Preferable



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A new DAAB (German Allergy and Asthma Society) study proves that indoor levels of airborne fine dust are reduced, in places dramatically, by the use of carpeting. Is a revolution in the making, as the first results suggest?

Smooth flooring or wall-to-wall carpet? The answer has divided allergy patients, doctors and scientists into two camps.

In the February 2005 issue of "Allergie Konkret", a health magazine of the DAAB (Deutscher Allergie- und Asthmabund e.V.) that gives detailed and interdisciplinary information about themes like allergies, asthma or neurodermatitis, an article deals with fine dust load in the indoor air and gives clear preference to textile floor coverings.

Fine dust is a big problem, especially for allergy patients. Irrespective of the kind of dust inhaled, the particles as such, with their mechanical effect, cause irritation when they enter the respiratory tract. Where the bronchial system has previous damage, this effect will be so much the stronger. Moreover, we find other pollutants bound to these particles, e.g., allergens that, in this manner, may get deep down into the lungs where relevant reactions may be caused.

The quality of the outdoor air has continuously improved up to the present day. This is the consequence of scientific findings and the resulting laws and regulations enacted to protect health.

From the DAAB's point of view and also from the Society for Environmental and Indoor Room Analysis (GUI), indoor rooms - where we spend more than 90% of our lifespans - are given too little attention.

Carpeting is preferable

A study commissioned by the DAAB (the German Allergy and Asthma Society) now shows that using smooth flooring markedly increases the risk of finding an increased fine dust load in indoor rooms, while using wall-to-wall carpeting minimises this risk. The results were presented to the public in Düsseldorf on June 18, 2005 at a conference hosted by the DAAB.

The average fine dust concentration in indoor rooms equipped with smooth flooring material is twice as high as in indoor rooms equipped with wall-to-wall carpeting, and thus exceeds the limit value. With $62.9 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, the arithmetic mean value of the fine dust concentration in rooms with smooth flooring clearly exceeds the limit value of $50 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, whereas in households with wall-to-wall carpeting, the mean value amounts to $30.4 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and is thus substantially lower than the limit value.

When individual rooms are considered, the limit value is exceeded in some cases. This, however, is due to other marginal parameters such as smoking, pets, kind and frequency of cleaning, activities in the rooms, etc.

Above all for particularly sensitive persons already suffering from previous damage to their airways, the selection of a flooring material binding dust and not emitting it to the air to be breathed is an essential preventive aspect.

The article has been translated to English and to French and is available, on request, at info@canadiancarpet.org.