



THE THREAD

Unraveling the Mysteries of Fibers, Fabrics and Floorcoverings

VACUUM CLEANERS... The Hype About HEPA

Choosing a new vacuum cleaner can confuse even the most savvy shopper. Canister or upright? Bag or bagless? Which accessories are most useful? Add to this the fact that vacuum cleaners can vary in price from under \$75 to well over \$1500 and it's easy to see why the selection can be so difficult. One of the many decisions to be made before purchasing involves the filtering system and knowing more about HEPA will make you a smarter consumer.

What is HEPA?

The term "HEPA" is an abbreviation for "High Efficiency Particulate Air." These filters were originally developed during the Manhattan Project in the 1940's to prevent the spread of airborne radioactive contaminants.

HEPA filters may be beneficial to asthma and allergy sufferers because the HEPA filter traps the fine particles which can aggravate allergy and asthma symptoms. For a HEPA filter in a vacuum cleaner to be effective, the vacuum cleaner must be designed so that all the air drawn into the machine is expelled through the filter, with none of the air leaking past it.

This is often referred to as "Sealed HEPA" or sometimes the more ambiguous "True HEPA." Vacuum cleaners simply labeled HEPA have a HEPA filter, but not all air necessarily passes through it.



Is It Really HEPA?

Vacuum cleaner filters marketed as "HEPA-like" will typically use a filter of a similar

construction to HEPA, but without the filtering efficiency.

"True" HEPA filters must be individually tested and certified to meet the 99.97% efficiency at 0.3 micron performance level. Each filter is subjected to sophisticated testing, after which the individual filters are assigned a serial number and the test results are recorded on the filter itself. If you are looking at a vacuum without this information on the filter, it is not a true HEPA vacuum.

Are HEPA Filters Necessary?

Though high-efficiency filters like HEPA might be best for those who are particularly sensitive to dust and allergens, results from a leading consumer testing company show that many vacuums without HEPA filters do an excellent job of keeping the dirt inside the machine. For healthy people who may not be as sensitive, these HEPA-free machines may suffice. John Bower, author of *The Healthy House*, agrees, pointing out that larger particles such as pollen can be removed by even a medium efficiency filter like those found on most vacuums. "HEPA filters can

Superior Service, Smart Solutions

Fiber-Seal Systems • Dallas • Texas • 214.333.9400 • www.FiberSeal.com

make a difference for people with asthma and allergies, but in a lot of cases, HEPA filters are overkill," Bower says.

A Word About Dyson

Dyson vacuum cleaners created quite a sensation when they were originally introduced. In fact, Dyson's marketing campaign was largely responsible for the creation of the bagless vacuum category and it spawned many imitators. It is interesting to note that Dyson vacuums (and some other bagless units) do utilize HEPA filters. However, allergy sufferers may want to consider the sometimes dusty and messy chore of emptying the dirt cup and cleaning the filters. Some consumers prefer not to see the soil and simply change the bag.

Dyson machines have also been accused of causing excessive fuzzing and pilling of various carpet styles. This problem has led several carpet manufacturers to void the warranty if such a vacuum is used, due to the aggressive nature of the brushes on Dyson vacuum cleaners. This includes both synthetic and wool carpet products, though loop pile wool yarns are most susceptible to this type of damage.

The Aftercare Pros!

One of the greatest benefits of applying a protective treatment to new and existing carpets is that it makes the fibers more soil resistant, creating a more effective vacuuming process. In addition, our Service Centers are always on call to help you

with every question concerning the care of your carpet.

Need Help With Carpet Protection Or Carpet Cleaning?

Your local Fiber-Seal Service Center is ready to help and just a click away.



<http://fiberseal.com/locations/>