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CAPSULE

Clearing the air

By Janet Cromley, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer
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THOSE snazzy HEPA -- high efficiency particulate air -- filters designed for home use may actually do a body good, Danish researchers have found.

Just two days of exposure to HEPA filters in the home resulted in a significant, positive effect on a key measure of cardiovascular health among 21 nonsmoking couples ages 60 to 75, says Dr. Steffen Loft, professor of environmental health at the University of Copenhagen's Institute of Public Health and lead author of the study, which appeared this month in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine.

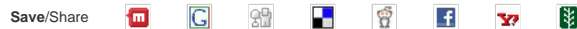


Cleaner
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Using a finger sensor to measure the function of small blood vessels in participants, the researchers found that reducing airborne particles resulted in an 8% improvement in microvascular function, the ability of small arteries to relax when blood is flowing through them. Poor function is associated with increased risk of heart attacks. The HEPA filters removed about 60% of the measurable air particles in the homes.

Although the results are promising, "there's quite a way to go with a lot more studies before we can recommend HEPA filters in homes," Loft says.

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