

Carpet floor: advantages for allergy sufferers

A smooth floor or a carpet floor? At present practitioners treating allergy sufferers and scientists are split into two camps. A study carried out by DAAB (Deutscher Allergie- und Asthmabund e.V.) shows that the use of smooth floors increases the likelihood of an increased concentration of fine dust particles, while the use of fabric floors minimises this likelihood. The results were presented to the public during the German Allergy and Asthma Conference on Saturday 18 June 2005.

The average quantity of fine dust in houses with a smooth floor amounts to $62.9 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and is twice as high as in homes with a floor covering. This accordingly exceeds the set limit of $50 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. This mathematically calculated average value for concentrations of fine dust particles in rooms with smooth floors clearly exceeds the value of $50 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Households with floor covering have an average value to $30.4 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, substantially less than the set maximum value.

Individual rooms could exceed the limit. This is caused by individual circumstances such as smoking, pets, frequency of cleaning, use of the room etc. These are described in our scientific publication. Above all, for oversensitive people already suffering from airway complaints it is essential to select a floor covering to which the dust adheres instead of giving it off into the air.

Fine dust is a major problem for allergy sufferers irrespective of the type of dust inhaled. The particles cause irritation when they enter the airways. If the bronchial system has already been damaged the effect is all the greater. We even find much more soiling attached to these particles, for example allergy-causing particles that in this way can penetrate deeper in the lungs where they may cause violent reactions.

The quality of the outside air improves by the day. This is a consequence of scientific results of investigations and legal regulations to protect people. This is also the core of the current discussion about fine dust. According to GerSeite, representatives of DAAB and, for example, the Sociëteit voor omgeving- en binnenshuisanalyse (GUI), too little attention is devoted to rooms indoors where we spend more than 90% of our lives.

A detailed publication is currently being prepared. This will cover the marginal parameters for the measuring of spaces and their influence on fine dust particles. The study was published this year and is also available to readers of the DAAB health journal "Allergie Konkret". The results were presented in Düsseldorf during the German Allergy and Asthma Conference on Saturday 18 June 2005.

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