



Is Your New Car Hazardous to Your Health?

A recent study shows that the prized new car smell is associated with a toxic cocktail of chemicals that may present significant health risks.

Schaumburg, IL ([PRWEB](#)) December 6, 2005 -- The seductive smell of a new car interior is unmistakable. Car buyers often associate the heady smell with feelings of pride and satisfaction. Unfortunately, that prized smell is the result of chemicals known as volatile organic compounds, or [VOCs](#). And these fragrant fumes can make people sick.

Dr. Joseph [Mercola](#), a New York Times bestselling author and founder of [Mercola.com](#), the second most visited non-government health [website](#) after WebMD, addressed this topic recently. He wonders why the American government and U.S. automakers aren't taking this [hazardous health issue](#) more seriously.

In one recent study by Australian researchers, 30 to 40 different new car VOCs were detected. These compounds carry tongue-twisting names like toluene, styrene, cyclohexanone, xylene, formaldehyde, and trimethylbenzene. VOCs are created from the outgassing of residual plastics, adhesives, sealants, paints, solvents and other chemicals used during the new car interior production process.

These nasty chemicals can cause headaches, nausea, drowsiness, confusion, and irritation of the eyes, nose and throat. They can particularly irritate those with chemical sensitivities. What's worse, a number of VOCs — including styrene, formaldehyde, benzene, and cyclohexanone — are considered to be carcinogenic or cancer-causing substances. And xylene can be toxic to fetal development.

Although there is no direct evidence yet that the level of car VOCs could cause cancer, the fumes emitted in this toxic chemical cocktail can be several times the limit considered safe for homes or buildings.

Earlier this year, Japanese car manufacturers agreed to reduce the concentration of many of these chemical emissions, matching guidelines set for air quality in homes. This is the first time that automakers have adopted government guidelines on this issue. Japan's top auto manufacturers — Nissan, Toyota, Honda, Mazda and Mitsubishi — are starting to produce cars that comply with lower VOC levels and using this fact as an important selling point.

Dr. Mercola discussed this issue on his [website](#) recently, stating: "It's great that Japanese automakers are taking this initiative, and I hope the idea spreads." Unfortunately, U.S. automakers haven't paid much attention to car interior air quality — yet. Hopefully, decisive action by the Japanese manufacturers will spur more attention from their American and European competitors.

While the levels of VOCs can reach unhealthy concentrations in a closed vehicle when the outside temperature rises, the good news is that most of the VOCs found in new cars dissipate with time, usually about six months. Until that time, new car buyers should allow plenty of outside air in to dissipate the fumes by opening the window, turning on the air conditioner, opening the vents and keeping the door open when practical.

Dr. Mercola, a leader in the U.S. wellness movement, considers VOCs to be one of the [ten most common toxins](#)



that everyone should be aware of. Unlike the odor of a new car, many of these toxins are things that people can't smell, see or otherwise notice. However, with 77,000 chemicals produced in North America alone and the rising numbers of cancers, immune system disorders, neurological problems, and other major illnesses, the effects of these [toxic substances](#) deserve detailed study.

To review the other nine potentially dangerous toxins on Dr. Mercola's list and learn how to protect themselves and their families from them, readers can go to [Dr. Mercola's website](#).

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