

Everything Causes Cancer!



This was my daughter's response to a recent email that was circulating warning us against the dangers lurking in hot cars (and I mean temperature not style).

An unhealthy situation created by heated automobile plastic like dashboards, seats, a/c ducts and ANY other plastic objects added to or left in your car (water bottles)- ALL emit benzene, a petrochemical, a natural component of crude oil and a carcinogen, which we know, is a cancer causing toxin. Benzene poisons your bones, causes aplastic anemia and reduces white blood cells. Prolonged exposure can affect your liver and kidneys, cause leukemia and increase the risk of some cancers. It can also cause miscarriages in pregnant females.

The acceptable indoor Benzene level is: 50mg per sq.ft.

A car parked indoors with closed windows will contain 400-800 mg of Benzene.

However, in a car parked outdoors, in the sun, at a temperature above 60 degrees F the Benzene level goes up to 2000-4000 mgs. **40 times** the acceptable level!

What should you do before getting in the car?

The email advises to: "Take the time to observe the smell of heated plastic in your car, when you open it, and BEFORE you start it up". **I would skip this part.** If you're smelling the fumes, it means you are breathing them in. Not necessary. **Counterproductive.**

The email informs us that car manuals advise rolling down the windows to let out all the hot air before turning on the A/C. Makes perfect sense. And "It's never too late to make positive changes". I say be proactive. That's why it's so important to arm yourself with the facts and to, honestly- **use common sense.** Because you can't see it doesn't mean it's not there and that it won't hurt you. We are bombarded with potential carcinogens and toxins everyday, especially if we're living the urban life.

We joke that we live in our cars and depending on where you live, it's basically true. Sometimes we are running in and out of our auto, which heightens this situation,

especially if you are like me. We drive our kids to school and open the car. Often if we are running late everyone piles in before we have 'cleared the air'. I pull out of the driveway as soon as all the seat belts are clicked into place. If I'm off from work, I'll drive back home eat some breakfast, while the car is sitting in the sun, because my neighbor's relative has already taken up the entire (and only) space in front of my house where there is shade! A couple hours later I run out and the car is heated up once more.

I run to Whole Foods for some 'organic' produce and gluten free 7 grain bread. Guess what- all the parking spots in the shade are taken! This scenario can go on numerous times during the day for many of us who are 'coming and going'.

So the good advice here is:

1. Do not turn on the A/C as soon as you enter the car.
2. Unlock the door and if you have power windows- hit those buttons while outside the car; let the old toxic air escape and the new fresh air circulate in. It's not the air conditioning that is harmful it's the accumulated toxins that the A/C blows around.
3. Then turn on the A/C after a couple of minutes.

I'll bet we are better, more focused drivers when we follow this ritual especially if we have environmental sensitivities or cerebral allergies.

Next we'll look at what else helps us to combat carcinogens like benzene. We know we can't avoid them all, especially after catastrophic events like oil spills.

So what can we do ourselves while the government argues over regulations?

What do you do to protect yourself and precious family?

What do you tell your children when they say, "Everything Causes Cancer"!