Scientific Study

Automobile Air Fresheners Produce Harmful Gases in Your Vehicle

"The chemicals in the air freshener formed highly toxic compounds."

Society expects automobiles, being rather confined spaces, to smell good. Often this is misinterpreted as smelling fragrant with an automobile air freshener that covers up odors rather than actually cleaning and airing out the vehicle.

Scientists at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering in Korea performed experiments on the emissions from automobile air fresheners containing the common air freshener chemicals alpha-pinene, beta-pinene, p-cymene, and limonene.

When subjected to ozone-initiated oxidation, the chemicals in the air freshener formed highly toxic compounds.

The study observed the formation of irritating ultra-fine particles and gaseous compounds, including formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, acrolein, acetone, and propionaldehyde

This study provided an insight on the potential exposure of passengers and small children in the confined space of an automobile.

Air fresheners don't remove odors. On the contrary, air fresheners cover up odors with more odors, albeit a supposedly more pleasant odor.

Pets and small children are made ill by these toxicants much easier than adults. Exposure may result in irritability, headache, anxiety, fatigue, respiratory problems, asthma, and other seemingly nonspecific symptoms. Children may develop behavioral problems.

Simple alternatives to the use of air fresheners include keeping a vehicle clean, opening the windows to allow for air circulations, smoking outside the vehicle, and using alternatives to chemical air fresheners for a pleasant aroma. Some ideas for a pleasant aroma include a sachet of coffee beans or your favorite dried flower petals.

Whatever the alternative, clean is in and air fresheners are out.

Reference

Lamorena RB, Lee W. Influence of ozone concentration and temperature on ultra-fine particle and gaseous volatile organic compound formations generated during the ozone-initiated reactions with emitted terpenes from a car air freshener. Hazard Mater. 2008 Feb 7