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## New car smell linked to cancer



New cars - danger built in?

Researchers in Australia say the smell of new cars can be toxic and can even cause cancer.

A two-year study by an Australian government research organisation found gases from vinyl and plastic materials in new cars cause headaches, nausea and drowsiness.

The chemicals involved include benzene - a known cancer-causing agent - which was found in one case at five times the recommended exposure limit.

**Danger odours**  
**Benzene - carcinogen**  
**Acetone - irritant**  
**Ethylbenzene - toxin**  
**Xylene isomers - foetal toxin**

The study by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) found emissions can take just a few minutes to take effect and may be responsible for many accidents.

"Just as air inside our homes and workplaces is often much more polluted than the air outside, so sitting in a new car can expose you to [dangerous] levels of toxic emissions," said the head of CSIRO's air quality control unit, Steve Brown.

Long-term exposure could cause cancers and abnormalities in unborn babies.

**'Spaced out'**

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The study found anecdotal evidence of drivers becoming ill while driving their new cars.

Symptoms included: headaches; lung irritation, swellings; and feeling "spaced out".

He advised people who buy new cars to take measures to ensure plenty of fresh air circulates within the car while driving for the first six months.

The automotive industry has criticised the study, saying people are exposed to similar substances every day.

A spokesman for the Australian Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries said the anecdotal evidence could be due to the people involved being particularly sensitive to the chemicals.

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