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AIR PURIFICATION UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

The UK has one of the highest incidences of allergies worldwide, and the number of both adult and child sufferers is growing each year.

For those affected, the financial, physical and emotional costs can be extremely high, with research from air purification experts, Fellowes, predicting that £384m* will be spent on treating allergies this year alone.

Almost anything can be an allergen for someone, causing symptoms from a runny nose, itchy eyes and skin rashes, to even more serious breathing problems when a sufferer experiences an attack.

Emotional impact

Allergies can cause real misery. And thinking you are safe indoors isn't always the case as experts say that 43 per cent of British adults are allergic to at least one indoor airborne allergen, such as pet hair, dust mite faeces, chemical fumes and mould spores.

An allergy to dust mites in particular ranks as the second most debilitating, affecting one in 10 people all year round.

However, only 47 per cent have been diagnosed by a medical professional, with almost half (42 per cent) of sufferers self-diagnosing. Given that we spend 90 per cent** of our time inside, it's of no surprise that the emotional and physical impact outstrips the cost.

Those allergic to indoor allergens are impacted to a much greater degree, with a quarter of sufferers feeling exhausted, and almost one in 10 (nine per cent) feeling depressed.

Nikki Thomas, has four children aged from 18 months to four-years-old, and explains how her children all suffer: "We are a house full of sufferers. House dust mite allergies. Check. Animal allergies. Check. Add a few colds to the mix, and hay fever during the summer, and you can imagine

that there is pretty much always someone sniffing and sneezing away somewhere and I am forever buying tissues. We usually start our day with a good dose of antihistamine.

“I am always looking for anything that might help. The house dust mite allergy is particularly tricky and I have done what I can to eliminate them as much as possible. I have bought anti-allergy bedding, a vacuum cleaner with an allergy and HEPA filter, and generally I try to keep my children’s bedrooms as clean and as dust free as possible. Sometimes, it can feel like an endless struggle and then when I watch my son fighting for breath and constantly sneezing at night, I wish that there was more that I could do. His condition isn’t life threatening, but for most of his life it has affected his sleeping patterns.”

Nikki isn’t alone, as two thirds of parents (66 per cent) say their offspring have suffered a damaged childhood because of allergies. One in 10 (13 per cent) state their children have needed to stay off school, and even six per cent of children have missed out on having a pet.

It’s clear that having an allergy has huge implications on quality of life for both children and adults. Exhaustion, and even in some cases depression are common when suffering from an allergy. Feelings of isolation also come into play as many sufferers can’t do the things they want, therefore, don’t feel in control of their lives.

Technological developments

There are additional solutions, however, that should be a part of an allergy management plan to help alleviate symptoms – like investing in an air purifier such as the new AeraMax™.

Nikki continues: “A few months ago we trialled a Fellowes AeraMax DX95 air purifier - the range has been designed to actively reduce the number of airborne particles that can affect health and well-being. It is a very sleek looking machine and doesn’t take up a lot of space. I pondered about where to try it and decided as the boys suffer the most with allergies to set it up in their bedroom.

“I have the AeraMax™ on pretty much constantly, and I have to say that I am impressed. The room is notably cooler and clear when you went in and if I did something like change the bedding, it was fascinating to watch the sensor react to the dust and the fan speed increase to deal with it.

“Did it help to improve symptoms? Absolutely. My son in particular was sneezing and sniffing a lot less.

“However, my other son was trickier as the house dust mites are harder to control, but saying that, we saw a real reduction in his sneezing and sniffing too.”

How does this unique range of air purifiers work? Air purification expert, Mike Booth, from Fellowes, explains: “AeraMax™ uses a four-stage purification system that filters indoor airborne allergens and contaminants, helping to reduce the risks of allergy and illness in the family home.

Each of the three machines in the AeraMax™ range features a True HEPA filter. This stands for ‘High Efficiency Particulate Air, which means that the filter is tested and certified to capture 99.97% of airborne impurities as small as 0.3 microns. The range is scientifically proven to reduce exposure to allergen and is endorsed by Allergy UK, the British Allergy Foundation.

The intelligent AeraSmart™ Sensor monitors your indoor air quality in real time and adjusts the fan speed accordingly – meaning it’s completely hassle –free and automatic.

Allergy management

On talking about the overall impact the air purifier had on her family, Nikki comments: “I wish I had bought one sooner. I have started to put it on an hour before the boys go to bed and then keep it on low during the night and will re-assess in a few months’ time. I am really glad to finally have one and I would definitely recommend investing in one if you or your children have allergies.”

It’s evident that allergy sufferers can be affected almost anywhere and everywhere, and some are even allergic to their own home. However, the problem can extend to the workplace with one in ten saying their suffering is worse at work.

Most indoor environments actually trap airborne allergens where they can pose a risk to respiratory health. However, extreme measures to cope with allergies are being taken, such as replacing carpets with wooden floors. It seems that Brits are doing all they can to help tackle their symptoms.

Investing in an AeraMax™ air purifier should be a part of a longer term solution for anyone who suffers from an indoor allergy to help ease symptoms at any time of the year.

For more information Fellowes AeraMax range, please visit: www.fellowes.com/AeraMaxUK

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* Independent Research commissioned by Fellowes in association with Allergy UK and carried out by Dynamic Markets in May 2014

** <http://www.york.ac.uk/environment/postgraduate/msc-dip-environmental-science-and-management/indoor-pollution/>