**Important Factors of a Great Air Purifier for Cat Allergies**

**Advanced Filtration**

If you’re overwhelmed, ignore all of the other features found in air purifiers and pay attention to a single fundamental component: the filtration system. It’s the key to the purifier’s ability to control airborne allergens.

**HEPA Filtration**

Look for air purifiers built with a true HEPA filter (high efficiency particulate air filter). HEPA filters capture 99.97% of particles at a size of .3 microns and above. Because of their exceptional ability to arrest airborne particulates, these filters are used to purify the air in medical facilities and cleanrooms. Perhaps most famously, these filters were used in the Manhattan Project to stop the spread of airborne radioactive contaminants.

Some air purifiers feature a filtration system with a “HEPA style filter, “HEPA-like filter”, or “HEPA-type” filter. These filters don’t satisfy the official requirements for a true HEPA filter and may not meet performance standards.

These filters are rated based on how well they block particles of varied sizes. They’re rated according to the “minimum efficiency reporting system” or MERV. HEPA filters are available in a range of MERV ratings from MERV 1 to MERV 12. Higher MERV ratings equate to the ability to remove smaller particles. Filters rated at a MERV 10 or higher are best for arresting allergens.

Unfortunately, most air purifiers don’t publicize the MERV rating of the HEPA filter. You’ll need to largely rely on reviews to make a guess about the effectiveness of the HEPA filter. The quality of the air purifier’s construction also plays a part in how well the HEPA filter captures allergens.

**Pre-filters**

Pre-filters are more porous than the main particle filter. This allows them to capture large particles and prevent them from entering the HEPA filter. A prefilter helps to increase the filtration system’s longevity.

**Carbon Filtration**

Activated carbon captures chemical vapors in the air, helping to rid the atmosphere of odors. If you’re often bothered by litter box smells, a carbon filter can help to neutralize them, along with other household odors.

**Electrostatic Filtration**

Some filters use electrical charges to attract small, light particles in the air. These typically aren’t as effective at capturing allergens, so it’s usually better to use a traditional HEPA filter.

**Minimal Ozone Production**

Ionizing purifiers, along with dedicated ozone generators, produce ozone.

Ozone is considered an air pollutant by the United States EPA and other government organizations. Breathing it is associated with impaired lung function, chest pain, coughing, and a diminished ability to fight respiratory illness.

**Low Operating Costs**

Look for an air purifier that has been Energy Star Approved – these are certified energy efficient and will help you to save on the electric bill. Replacement filters also add to the yearly cost of owning an air purifier. Filters range in price, with the highest costing over $100. One way to minimize your operating costs is to choose a unit with a washable pre-filter that can capture large particles before they enter the HEPA filter.

**Minimal Noise**

Some air purifiers are loud enough to compete with conversation and relaxation.Look for quiet units with multiple speed settings, allowing you to turn down the volume when you need a quiet space.

**Fast and Effective Purification**

To control cat allergens, an air purifier should clean an entire room at least six times per hour. Some units tell you how many times they will clean a specific room size per hour. You can also calculate this based on the purifier’s CADR and the size of your room.

The CADR, or clean air delivery rate, is one measure of an air purifier’s ability to effectively eliminate airborne particles. The clean air delivery rate is the number of cubic feet of air the unit will purify per minute.

Some air purifiers have CADR certification granted by the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers. To attain this certification, manufacturers must subject their air purifier to specific testing procedures that determine the filtering speed and ability to filter dust, tobacco smoke, and pollen.

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