

Customer Service Frequently Asked Questions

Updated January 1, 2002

- 1. How long has Austin Air Systems been in business?**
Since 1990.
- 2. What is the difference between the AllergyMachine™ and the HealthMate™?**
The difference is in the filters. The HealthMate™ has a True Medical HEPA filter *surrounded* by a carbon/zeolite mixture which adsorbs odors and gases. The standard filter weighs approximately 21 lbs. The AllergyMachine™ has a HEGA filter. The HEGA is comprised of a True Medical HEPA filter placed *outside* an advanced military carbon cloth which absorbs odors and gases. The AllergyMachine™ filter weighs approximately 8 lbs.
- 3. Which is better for me the AllergyMachine™ or the HealthMate™?**
Both products are effective for those people with allergies and asthma. The AllergyMachine™ can be more effective for people who smoke or are in contact with more odor sources. It is also much lighter in weight. The HealthMate™ products have been working well for the last ten years and are more effective for those people with chemical sensitivities.
- 4. What is the difference between the HealthMate™ and the HealthMate+™?**
Both have a True Medical HEPA filter and granular carbon and zeolite. The carbon in the Plus model is impregnated with potassium iodide. This makes the unit even more effective at removing formaldehyde and ammonia. Austin Air's HealthMate+™ is best used in places like new homes, laboratories, beauty salons, funeral homes, etc. Sources of formaldehyde in homes can be carpets, wood panel, construction materials and furniture upholstery.
- 5. What exactly is a HEPA filter?**
The HEPA (High Efficiency Particle Arresting) filter was developed by the US Atomic Energy Commission to filter out sub-micron particles. All True Medical HEPA is laser-tested and must remove a minimum of 99.97% of all particulate matter greater than 0.3 microns in size. A human hair is about 300 times too large to penetrate a HEPA filter.
- 6. When would you recommend a Standard unit vs. a Junior?**
A standard is good for a one-story house or apartment. A HealthMate Jr™ unit would be recommended for a single room.

7. Can you put wheels/casters on a HealthMate Jr™ unit?

Yes. An additional charge is required and it takes about a week.

8. What is the mixture ratio of carbon to zeolite in the HealthMate™?

Approximately 10-1 (10 parts carbon, 1 part zeolite).

9. What do HEPA and HEGA stand for?

HEPA is **High Efficiency Particulate Arresting** developed by the US Atomic Energy Commission. HEPA filters must remove a minimum of 99.97% of particles down to .03 microns.

HEGA is unique to Austin Air and stands for **High Efficiency Gas Absorption**. A HEGA air cleaner combines a HEPA filtration system with an added military carbon cloth filter medium.

10. Why are Austin Air's products superior to others on the market?

Our filters make us better. Austin Air uses True Medical HEPA filter paper in all of our air cleaners (60 sq ft in The HealthMate™, HealthMate™+ and AllergyMachine™ and 30 sq ft in the HealthMate Jr™), 15 lbs. of activated carbon to maximize surface area in the HealthMate™ product and an advanced military carbon cloth in the AllergyMachine™ placed inside the True Medical HEPA filter to capture odors and gases.

Some other companies use a carbon blanket outside the HEPA filter, which doesn't provide much of a surface area for trapping harmful particles.

Austin Air's products are made of steel and have a powder coat paint, which is baked on, so the products do not off gas.

Other companies have plastic products and/or use sprayed on paint, so their products can emit harmful gases. Austin Air's products have a high-velocity airflow, which creates a clean air pocket around the user. If you turn on an Austin Air cleaner next to a competitor's you can really feel the difference. Austin Air's products can clean the air in most bedrooms in less than 15 minutes.

Austin Air Cleaners use energy efficient PSC motors, running your air cleaner can use less energy than some light bulbs.

Austin Air offers a 30-day satisfaction guarantee, a 5-year parts and labor guarantee and a 5-year pro-rated filter guarantee. Once you experience super cleaned air, you will agree, Austin Air's products are superior to others on the market.

11. How many square feet of HEPA does each unit have?

The Allergy Machine, HealthMate™ and HealthMate+™ have 60 Sq. Ft. The HealthMate Jr™ Model has 30 Sq. Ft.

12. What is the CFM rate

The CFM (Cubic Feet per Minute) is the measurement of how much air passes through the unit. For the standard, the HealthMate+™, and the AllergyMachine™ the CFM is 400 cfm on high and 75cfm on low. The HealthMate Jr™ is 200 cfm on high and 50cfm on low.

13.

What is the CAD rate? (Clean Air Delivery Rate)

Austin Air does not believe in the CAD rate because it does not measure how clean the air is. This CAD rate is the airflow times filtration efficiency, a unit that has a flow rate of 200cfm and a 50% efficient filter has a CAD rate of 100. A unit that has a flow rate of 100cfm and a filter efficiency of 100% will also have a CAD rate of 100. While both machines have the same CAD rate, the second one is the better air cleaner.

14.

How many filters are inside the Austin Air cleaner?

There are three filters. The first filter is a pre-filter (known as Permafilt™) which is a cotton cloth that lines the inside wall of the unit. The purpose of the pre-filter is to stop hair or large dust particles from clogging the HEPA filter. In the HealthMate™ the main filter is comprised of two filter medium: activated granular carbon/zeolite mixture and True Medical HEPA paper. In the AllergyMachine™ there is the True Medical HEPA and the military carbon cloth filter known as HEGA.

15.

What is Zeolite?

Zeolite is a natural mineral that has the distinct capability of adsorbing certain gas molecules. Zeolite is particularly effective in adsorbing formaldehyde, ammonia and carbon monoxide.

16.

What is activated carbon?

Activated carbon is effective at removing gas molecules and odors. Activated carbon is the most common element in military gas masks. The most common method of activating carbon is a two-stage steaming process, which enlarges the carbon's surface pore size. This in turn produces a more accessible internal surface area allowing for greater odor and gas adsorption.

17.

What are the carbon and zeolite used for?

Carbon and zeolite are used to remove gases, odors and chemicals. Both have properties that allow them to adsorb chemicals and gaseous materials. (See the Chemical and Odors sheets on Pages 23 - 26 of this manual)

18.

What is the pre-filter made of?

The pre-filter or Permafilt™ is made of cotton.

19.

What is Austin Air's return policy?

From the date of purchase, the customer has 30 days to contact the Dealer in order to obtain a Return Authorization. The Dealer obtains the RA# from Austin Air. The unit is shipped at the expense of the customer (original shipping charges will not be reimbursed). It is the responsibility of the Dealer to issue their Customer a credit.

20.

What are the guarantees?

The motor, fan and other working parts are guaranteed for 5 years. The filter carries a pro-rated 5 year warranty. This means if the filter lasts less than 5 years, Austin Air will discount the cost of a new filter based on the number of years the used filter has been in use.

- 21. What would cause a filter to fill up in less than 5 years?**
Using the air cleaner in an area having *many* pets, new carpeting, paint fumes, heavy smoking, urban pollution, photo studio, etc will diminish the filter's life.
- 22. How do I know when the filter is full and should be replaced?**
There are two ways to know. First, if you smell a unpleasant odor coming from the unit, the carbon is probably full. Second, if you notice a significantly reduced airflow, it is probably time to replace your filter.
- 23. Which end of the filter goes in first?**
Both ends of the filter have a rubber sealing gasket going around it. Because the filter is inserted while the machine is upside down, the end of the filter labeled "Top/Motor Side" is placed label side down into the unit. (please refer to "Changing the Filter" on Page 17). To ensure correct placement, one gasket is very close inner edge of the end cap, and the other is closer to the center. The end with the gasket that is closer to the center is the end that goes in farthest from the motor.
- 24. Which filter fits my machine?**
If your unit was made in prior to 1996, you have a ridged filter. If your filter was made in 1996 or later, then you have a flat filter. If the filter was prior to 1996 then the customer needs to describe what the filter looks like. If the filter is flat, both ends will look identical (both are flat). If one end is flat and the other has a raised ring around it, then it is ridged.
- 25. How long do you think my unit will last?**
The unit should last for five years or more if properly maintained. It is the filter that must be replaced when needed.
- 26. Where should I place the unit for maximum effectiveness?**
It can be placed anywhere in a room, including corners, but must be at least four (4) inches from the wall to give consistent effective results. The air cleaner should be placed in the bedroom at night with the door closed in order to produce the best personal results. The best room in the house to use a single machine is the bedroom.
- 27. How far from the wall does the Austin Air cleaner have to be?**
At least 4 inches.
- 28. How much space does the air cleaner effectively clean?**
The standard HealthMate™ unit or the AllergyMachine™ will clean an average bedroom in about 15 minutes with the door closed. In technical terms, they clean up to 1,500 square feet. The HealthMate Jr™ model cleans up to 700 square feet. (*All estimates assume 8 ft. ceilings.*)

29.

Is the air cleaner noisy to operate?

Depending on the fan setting used, the noise level ranges from less than 50 to 65 decibels, or from the sound of a whisper to the sound of a normal conversation.

30.

Does the unit produce any harmful substances?

No. Austin's Air cleaners do not produce ozone, ions, or negative ions. Ozone is active oxygen and can be dangerous to people's health. This is especially true for people with respiratory problems such as asthma emphysema, and bronchitis.

31.

Does the Austin Air cleaner require any special maintenance?

Periodic (once a month) vacuuming of the four sides of the outside screen with the brush attachment of your vacuum cleaner is the only regular maintenance required for the air cleaner.

32.

How much electricity is required to run the standard air cleaner?

It uses an ordinary 120 volt outlet. Maximum draw is about 135 watts on the high setting or 1 cent per hour, average cost.

33.

How reliable is the construction?

The entire body of the air cleaner is made of solid steel, which has been welded together to prevent any rattles. The paint used is powder coating, baked at 375 degrees Fahrenheit. This process eliminates any odor or off-gas emissions while enhancing durability.

34.

Does the air cleaner have any plastic parts?

The only plastic components in the air cleaner are the fan blade, wheels or feet and the control knob on the front of the unit.

35.

Is the motor varnished?

No, varnish is not used to coat the motor winding.

36.

Can wheels be added to the HealthMate Jr.™?

Yes, wheels can be added as a special order. There is an additional cost of \$25.00 and the process can take up to 7 - 10 business days.

37.

Is the carbon activated to last only 5 years?

No, adsorption is the mechanism by which carbon removes vapor phase pollution from the air. The pollutants are held on the surface of the carbon. Therefore, the more surface area that the carbon has, the more capacity it has. Activation is a process that increases the surface area of the carbon.

38.

How can you tell if air is being sucked into the filter if there isn't a place on the unit where you can feel the suction?

Air moves through the unit by means of a fan. The unit has been specifically designed to utilize this fan to maximize the air velocity discharging from the unit and to minimize the energy the fan uses sucking air into the filter. This is done by use of a large open area in the screen through which air passes before it goes through the filter. In simplest of terms, air can not come out of the unit unless it passes through the screen and the filter. If you feel air coming out of the louvre, it must be going through the filter.

39.

Why does the unit NOT have an indicator light to indicate that the filter needs replacing?

Short answer - There is not enough value added to unit and user to justify the cost of the device. Long answer - If you were to add such a device, there are three ways to do so. First, a simple timer could be used that would keep track of the length of time the unit has operated and turn on a light after a given length of time. Several companies that provide such a light do it this way. It is the least complicated and least costly method. Unfortunately, it really does not measure anything that tells that the filter needs to be replaced. Second, you could measure the pressure drop across the filter. The higher the pressure drop, the dirtier the filter. A light could be turned on when a certain pressure drop was reached. This method is more costly than the first but does work. However, normally the carbon is used up in the filters long before the high-pressure drop level is reached. Therefore, the filter would really need to be replaced before the light is ever turned on. Third the vapor phase pollution level of the air exiting the unit could be monitored and a light turned on when the level exceeded a certain level. Although this method works and is possible to be done, it is very costly and would unjustifiably burden the ultimate purchaser of the unit.

40.

Would our unit help in the removal of Radon should a nuclear situation occur?

(Please carefully read and understand before answering this question) Our unit does NOT remove Radon gas from the air. However, radon gas does affect the airborne particles creating what are know as Radon daughters. Our unit will remove Radon daughters from the air.

41.

How did you determine that our filters will last as long as 5 years? Why?

It is the quantity of carbon / zeolite and True Medical HEPA paper that is in the filter that establishes the life of the filter.

42.

What type of testing and approvals did your unit pass?

UL (United States), CSA (Canada).