

Household items as bad as cars for pollution

19th February, 2018



Scientists say we are unaware of a massive cause of pollution that is right under our very noses. Everyday household items such as toothpaste, shaving foam, deodorant, perfume and furniture polish contain volatile compounds that help

to cause pollution. Dr Brian McDonald, an air-pollution researcher at the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, conducted research into how our homes create pollution. His team was surprised to find that household items now contribute as heavily to particular types of air pollution as cars, trucks and other vehicles. Dr McDonald said that as "the transportation sector gets cleaner, these other sources...become more and more important".

The researchers focused on volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in a whole range of household items. VOCs react with sunlight to form ozone pollution. This escapes into the environment and gets trapped in our house or apartment, causing pollution in our homes. The scientists said VOCs interact with other chemicals to form tiny particles in the air. These particles can lead to lung damage. Dr McDonald said governments should regulate household products more tightly to reduce their negative impact on our health. He issued a stark warning, saying: "The things I use in the morning to get ready for work are comparable to emissions that come out of the tailpipe of my car."

Sources: news.sky.com / nature.com / phys.org

Writing

Pollution will be a thing of the past one day. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

scientists / unaware / pollution / noses / deodorant / surprised / research / trucks / volatile / organic / compounds / sunlight / environment / lung damage / my car

True / False

- a) Scientists said pollution is adversely affecting our noses. T / F
- b) Toothpaste contains compounds that add to pollution. T / F
- c) Some scientists were not surprised by the findings of their research. T / F
- d) Household items create a similar amount of pollution as cars and trucks. T / F
- e) The scientists looked carefully at volatile organic compounds (VOCs). T / F
- f) VOCs and sunlight can mix to create ozone pollution. T / F
- g) A scientist said government regulation was not necessary. T / F
- h) A scientist said he needed his car's tailpipe in the mornings. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. massive | a. discharges |
| 2. volatile | b. carried out |
| 3. conducted | c. origins |
| 4. sector | d. variety |
| 5. sources | e. captured |
| 6. range | f. enormous |
| 7. form | g. effect |
| 8. trapped | h. field |
| 9. impact | i. unpredictable |
| 10. emissions | j. make |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you know about ozone?
- c) Is it healthier to open a window in your house?
- d) What kind of government regulation is needed?
- e) What do you do that creates pollution?
- f) Should we all live in the countryside?
- g) What things do you use in the morning to get ready?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the scientists?

Breaking News English - The Mini Lesson

Phrase Match

1. a massive
 2. right under our
 3. deodorant, perfume
 4. particular types
 5. the transportation sector gets
 6. The researchers focused on volatile
 7. VOCs react with sunlight to
 8. form tiny particles
 9. These particles can lead
 10. emissions that come out of the
- a. organic compounds
 - b. of air pollution
 - c. to lung damage
 - d. in the air
 - e. very noses
 - f. and furniture polish
 - g. tailpipe
 - h. cleaner
 - i. form ozone pollution
 - j. cause of pollution

Discussion – Student B

- a) How dangerous are the chemicals in our homes?
- b) How much pollution does perfume contain?
- c) What do you think of perfume?
- d) Will you change the household items you use?
- e) How can we reduce pollution?
- f) What are the worst kinds of pollution?
- g) Is pollution becoming more or less of a problem?
- h) How polluted is your town?

Spelling

1. a mveaiss cause of pollution
2. shaving foam, dneotaodr, perfume
3. contain ilvatelo compounds
4. ibutntcreo as heavily
5. tlracrapui types of air pollution
6. the transportation trocse
7. aiogrnc compounds
8. VOCs icrnteat with other chemicals
9. to form tiny esapilrct
10. aletrgue household products
11. comparable to misnoisse
12. the ppailite of my car

Answers – Synonym Match

1. f	2. i	3. b	4. h	5. c
6. d	7. j	8. e	9. g	10. a

Role Play

Role A – A Shower

You think a shower is the thing you need most in the morning. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least necessary of these (and why): toast, five minutes more sleep or the news.

Role B – Toast

You think toast is the thing you need most in the morning. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least necessary of these (and why): a shower, five minutes more sleep or the news.

Role C – Five Minutes More Sleep

You think five minutes more sleep is the thing you need most in the morning. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least necessary of these (and why): toast, a shower or the news.

Role D – The News

You think the news is the thing you need most in the morning. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least necessary of these (and why): toast, five minutes more sleep or a shower.

Speaking – Mornings

Rank these with your partner. Put the things you need most in the mornings at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- 5 minutes extra sleep
- water
- a stretch
- a big breakfast
- a shower
- toast
- coffee
- the news

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	T	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.