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CR Quick Recommendations

Relatively few air cleaners excelled in our tests, especially among room models, which account for the most sales in dollars.

Many room air cleaners scored fair or poor in at least one of our four cleaning tests for dust and smoke. Tests confirmed that dust performance is also a good indicator of pollen performance, which is why we don't score it. Several small ionizing models scored poorly in air cleaning, and some failed the voluntary Underwriters Laboratories ozone test we replicated; all of these models are Not Recommended.

The Bionaire (9), TrueAir (11), Electrolux (13), Sharp (17), Kenmore (20), Soleus Air (25), and Zojirushi (26) room models have dust or odor sensors that automatically adjust fan speed. But most didn't kick in until levels were high, then shut off before levels dropped sufficiently.

A better bet: Run room models on Low and raise the fan speed only during dusting, vacuuming, or other situations that may increase airborne particles.

The Ratings for [room models](#) and [whole-house models](#) rank air cleaners by overall performance. **Quick Picks** lists models that perform well at a reasonable price.

Quick Picks

ROOM AIR CLEANERS

- 1 Friedrich** \$500
- 3 Whirlpool** \$250

Both can cover up to 500 square feet, cleaned effectively, and are quieter to run than the Kenmore (2) at a low speed. The Friedrich (1) costs twice as much as the Whirlpool (3) but requires less per year to run.

WHOLE-HOUSE AIR CLEANERS

- 1 Aprilaire** \$600 (pro-installed)
- 2 Carrier** \$500 (pro-installed)
- 9 American Air Filter** \$30 (do-it-yourself)
- 11 3M Filtrete** \$15 (do-it-yourself)

The Aprilaire (1) and Carrier (2) are top performers. Units of the Aprilaire (1) made from June 2000 through December 2004 were recalled to replace the plastic inner housing and filter with flame-resistant units (see page 11). The do-it-yourself American Air Filter (9) and 3M Filtrete (11) cost less per year than the Filtera (10), based on three-month replacement. Choose the American Air Filter (9) for systems that accept filters 4 inches thick, the 3M (11) for systems that use 1-inch filters.