

# toxic free airlines ←

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## **AEROTOXIC SYNDROME - CREW**

### WHAT IS IT?

It's the name given to the ill health caused by breathing in contaminated air on an aircraft. Pilots, cabin crew and passengers can all suffer from it.

### HOW DOES THE AIR GET CONTAMINATED?

The air we breathe in the cabin is bled off from the engines and is known as "bleed air." Along the way it can pick up constituents of fuel, hydraulic fluid and engine oil. An organophosphate that is a neuro toxin is added to the engine oil called Tricresyl Phosphate (TCP)

### I THOUGHT THE AIR WAS FILTERED?

The recirculated air goes through a High Efficiency Particulate Air filter (HEPA) to screen out dust, bacteria and viruses. The bleed air is unfiltered.

### WHAT DOES IT SMELL LIKE?

Some contaminants such as carbon monoxide and TCP are odourless. The combined chemicals have been described as smelling like sweaty socks, wet dog, vomit or a musty smell.

### WHY ALL THE FUSS ABOUT A BAD SMELL?

Inhaling these toxins can damage your lungs, nervous system, brain, heart and eventually cause cancer as they accumulate in the body.

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Short term: headache, dizziness, sore throat, nose & eye irritation, breathlessness, cough, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, mental confusion, memory loss, tiredness, hot flushes, nerve pain, flu-like illness but with a normal or low temperature, chemical bronchitis/pneumonia. Long term: pins & needles in hands & feet, numbness, nerve damage, muscle pain & weakness, joint pain, chronic fatigue, difficulty concentrating and thinking, inability to regulate body temperature.

These are just some of the symptoms. You can suffer from some or all of them depending on what and how much you have been exposed to. Some people will even die from heart failure, brain haemorrhage or pneumonia.

### DO THE SYMPTOMS START IMMEDIATELY?

Some will develop symptoms straightaway, others can take up to 2 weeks after a flight to react.

clean air  
is safe air

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## IF THE AIR IS CONTAMINATED WHY DON'T WE ALL GET ILL?

Everybody's ability to detoxify is different. Genetic susceptibility, amount of previous exposures, diet, level of exercise, medication being taken, general fitness and weight can all influence how much you will be affected.

## I NEVER GET ILL SO I DON'T NEED TO WORRY DO I?

You can be affected without realising it, for instance your blood pressure could be raised. These toxins accumulate in body fat and may make you ill one day.

## WHAT CAN I DO?

Report it :

Whenever fumes are smelt report it to the Flight Crew. Explain the significance and ask them to do an Air Safety Report and record it in the Aircraft Maintenance Log.

Put it in the Cabin defects log: what the smell was like, when, where & for how long it was smelt.

Reporting of fumes is mandatory (CAP 382, Nov 05). If the flight crew are reluctant tell them you will report it to the CAA.

CAA SAFETY REGULATORY GROUP, AVIATION HOUSE, GATWICK AIRPORT SOUTH WEST SUSSEX RH6 0YR

Do an Incident report. Take 2 photocopies, keep 1 for yourself, send 1 to your Union Health & Safety rep.

Raise awareness : tell other crew, family, friends and passengers.

Add your flight to the free online register for passengers and crew at [www.toxicfreeairlines.com](http://www.toxicfreeairlines.com)

Be aware of passengers coughing or complaining of dizziness and headaches. They may be more susceptible and giving you an early warning.

**REMEMBER - PASSENGERS AND CREW ARE THE ONLY CHEMICAL DETECTORS ON BOARD AN AIRCRAFT.**

Drink lots of water, increase sweating by exercise and saunas, wear a mask when you travel as a passenger especially during the critical phases of flight. Reduce the chemicals in your diet and home. Don't smoke, reduce alcohol consumption. Buy a blood pressure machine and monitor on your days off, see your GP about a reading above 140/90.

A Far Infra Red Sauna is a good way to detox after a flight, telephone Get-Fitt Ltd on 020 8445 5412 for more information.

Most doctors have never heard of Aerotoxic Syndrome so print information off the internet and take it with you. Good websites include:

[toxicfreeairlines.com](http://toxicfreeairlines.com) [aerotoxic.org](http://aerotoxic.org) [aopis.org](http://aopis.org) [gcaqe.org](http://gcaqe.org) [drmyhill.co.uk](http://drmyhill.co.uk)

