

## Something In The Air

### ■Snap-On Filter Can Purify Often-Contaminated Oxygen Inside Airliner

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By SUSAN CAMPBELL, **The Hartford Courant**

Sitting cheek-to-jowl next to a hacking man in airline Seat 16-C, the savvy traveler is forced to face facts: Sometimes an airplane can feel like a petri dish of infection and illness.

It is an enclosed space, ideal for the spread of germs.

Earlier this week, it was reported by the Associated Press that a man with a rare and exceptionally dangerous form of tuberculosis had been placed in quarantine by the U.S. government after possibly exposing passengers and crew members on two trans-Atlantic flights earlier this month. He had flown from Atlanta to Paris on May 12 aboard Air France Flight 385. He returned to North America on May 24 aboard Czech Air Flight 104 from Prague to Montreal. It was the first quarantine in the United States since the 1960s.

Excepting very rare occurrences such as this, there are common concerns for airline travelers: Why does the air smell funny? What is that stain on my tray table? And when was the last time the blanket was washed?

Accordingly, a host of new products promise to filter germs, as much as possible, and one of those is a bright blue Plane Clean Air filter developed by Avertch Inc.

Air quality on planes has long been a source of customer complaint. In 2004, the Federal Aviation Authority created the Center of Excellence for Airliner Cabin Environment Research to study how to improve in-flight air quality (and reduce the threat of chemical and biological risks while aloft). Some of the threats identified by the center included inhalation of engine fumes from recycled air and the potential spread of infectious diseases among passengers.

The Plane Clean Air filter (\$19.99) is a small (about 2½ inches in diameter) device that attaches over the gasper's nozzle - the small round dial through which air is pumped onto the passenger - and can be removed at the end of the flight. The filter is good for roughly 10 flights. Additional filters can be purchased when necessary, and after a mention on a hot-new product website, [www.pb-travel.com](http://www.pb-travel.com) received 600 orders in three days, said Margherita Blanc, pb-Travel spokeswoman. (The item was also featured on a recent "Ellen Degeneres Show.")

The device, which can be adjusted for air flow, includes an electrostatic filter that removes viruses, bacteria and particulate matter from the plane's air stream. It then blows the purified air onto the face of the passenger. The device meets FAA standards, and is available from [www.planecleanair.com](http://www.planecleanair.com) and [www.pb-travel.com](http://www.pb-travel.com).