

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

From air purifiers to holiday gifts: Experts say these are the products to buy before fall and winter

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At the start of the pandemic in March, some products seemed impossible to find stocked on store shelves: disinfectant wipes, yeast to make bread, bikes and even [jigsaw puzzles sold out](#) as stay-at-home orders swept the nation.

The same thing could happen again in the fall and winter, when there's expected to be another wave of infections as people [spend more time indoors](#). White House advisor Dr. Anthony Fauci said that Americans should prepare to "hunker down to get through this fall and winter," in a [panel discussion with doctors from Harvard Medical School](#) Sept. 10.

It's likely that people will return to a similar shopping patterns that they developed early in the pandemic, Kelly Haws, a marketing professor at the business school at Vanderbilt University who specializes in consumer psychology, tells [CNBC Make It](#).

Beyond feeling prepared, there's a psychological reason why we tend to "panic-shop" in times of crisis. "Covid-19 has forced many of us into circumstances where we feel out of control and [uncertain about the future](#)," Haws says. "Buying stuff that we need in our daily lives is a very easy form of regaining some control."

Here's what experts say you should buy now to be prepared for the fall and winter:

Air purifiers

We know that Covid-19 is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person sneezes, coughs, talks or breathes. Home air purifiers can filter out the airborne particles in your air that could possibly contain Covid-19, Shelly Miller, professor of mechanical engineering at the University of Colorado Boulder who studies urban air pollution, tells CNBC Make It.

HEPA, or "high-efficiency particulate air" filters have been shown to be very effective at capturing at least 99.97% of airborne particles that are at least 0.3 microns in size, she says. (For context, the [Covid-19 virus](#) is about 125 nanometers or 0.125 microns large.) Air cleaners essentially pull air in, pass it through a filter that removes small airborne particles and then dumps clean, particle-free air back in the room, she explains.

While it's not clear what effect these portable devices would have on [Covid-19 transmission](#), or if ventilation alone can eliminate the virus, increased air circulation is a good idea.

When buying an air purifier, look for a device that uses HEPA filters, and also consider the size of the space you're hoping to clean, Miller says. The Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers has a great [database of air cleaners](#) that have been independently vetted, she adds.