

*You can't see or smell carbon monoxide – many people do not know they have been exposed until it is too late!*

*Many injuries happen in **predictable, preventable** ways.*

*If you experience symptoms that could be from carbon monoxide poisoning, get fresh air immediately and call your fire department!*

## Unintentional Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

- Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning occurs by inhalation of a high concentration of CO over a short period of time, or small concentrations of CO over a long amount of time.
- Exposure usually occurs within an enclosed or semi-enclosed space.
- Common sources of CO exposure include: vehicle exhaust, small gasoline engines, generators, charcoal and wood stoves, room heaters, and fuel burning appliances.
- General health symptoms for persons who are exposed to higher levels of CO may include: headache, dizziness, weakness, fainting, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, mental confusion, sleepiness, chest pain, and breathing difficulties.
- Because CO is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, non-irritating gas, many people do not realize they have been exposed until it is too late.
- People who are intoxicated or asleep may show no symptoms of poisoning before death.
- From 2007-2009 in Oklahoma, 19 people died and 154 were hospitalized for CO poisoning.
- All people and animals are susceptible to CO poisoning, but unborn babies, infants, and people with heart disease, anemia, or respiratory disorders are more susceptible.

### Prevention

- Install and maintain CO alarms according to the manufacturer's instructions, and test alarms monthly.
- Install CO alarms outside bedrooms and on every level of the home.
- Have heating systems, including water heaters, and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances inspected yearly.
- Have chimneys inspected or cleaned yearly.
- Do not sleep in a room with an unvented gas/kerosene space heater.
- Never use generators indoors, even in the basement or garage. Keep generators a safe distance from vents, doors, and windows.
- Do not use gas ranges or ovens for heating.
- Do not use grills or camp stoves indoors.
- Do not use gasoline-powered tools or appliances (lawn mower, chain saw, blowers, etc.) in enclosed spaces.
- During and after a snow storm, make sure vents for furnaces, stoves, fireplaces, etc. are clear of snow build up.
- Never run a car or truck in a closed garage, or in a garage that is attached to a house.

### Exposure

- If your CO alarm activates or you experience symptoms that you think could be from CO poisoning,
  - Get fresh air immediately. Open doors and windows, turn off appliances, and leave the house.
  - Call for help and check to see if anyone in the home is experiencing symptoms.

### Internet Resources

[www.cdc.gov/co](http://www.cdc.gov/co)

[www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/carbon-monoxides-impact-indoor-air-quality](http://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/carbon-monoxides-impact-indoor-air-quality)

[www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/Home/Carbon-Monoxide/](http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Safety-Education/Safety-Guides/Home/Carbon-Monoxide/)

**Live Injury-Free!**