

Carbon Monoxide Information



You can't see it, taste it, or smell it, but low levels of carbon monoxide can make you sick and high levels can kill.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible, odorless gas that can escape from any fuel-burning appliance, such as a gas furnaces, water heaters and stoves, fireplace, wood stove, chimney or space heater. It can also be created by an automobile idling in a closed or attached garage.

The following steps can reduce exposure to carbon monoxide

- Keep gas appliances properly adjusted.
- Install and use an exhaust fan vented to outdoors over gas stoves.
- Open flues when fireplaces are in use.
- Make sure the doors on wood stoves fit tightly.
- Have a trained professional inspect, clean, and tune-up furnaces, flues, and chimneys annually; and repair any leaks promptly.
- Do not idle the car inside garage.
- Never burn charcoal inside a home, garage, vehicle, or tent.
- Never use portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a home, garage, vehicle, or tent.
- Install a carbon monoxide alarm.

How to protect yourself

- Have a qualified appliance technician check all fuel burning appliances, furnaces, venting and chimney system at least once a year or as recommended by the manufacturer
- Install at least one audible carbon monoxide alarm near your sleeping area.
- Choose an alarm that is Underwriters Laboratories Inc. listed. Look for the UL logo on the package.

How carbon monoxide alarms work

Carbon monoxide alarms sound based on exposure to carbon monoxide over time. They are designed to sound an alarm before an average, healthy adult would experience symptoms.

Remember -- it is the concentration of carbon monoxide over time that poses a threat.

If the CO alarm goes off

- DO NOT panic
- Press the test/silence button to temporarily quiet the alarm.
- Move everyone to a source of fresh air.
- Call 911
- Leave the CO alarm where it is.
- Do not re-enter your home until the emergency responder has arrived, your home is aired out and your CO alarm returns to normal operation.

Common symptoms of CO poisoning

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Flu-like symptoms