

Often called the invisible killer, **Carbon Monoxide** is an odorless, colorless gas created when fuels (like gasoline, wood, charcoal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely.

- Carbon Monoxide (CO) can come from a variety of sources, including cars, portable generators, and malfunctioning fuel-burning appliances such as furnaces, ranges, water heaters and room heaters.
- Burning charcoal in fireplaces or grills inside a home, or in semi-enclosed areas can also result in lethal carbon monoxide levels.

Early symptoms of CO poisoning can be similar to food poisoning or the flu, but without the fever. As the concentration of carbon monoxide exposure becomes worse the symptoms may progress in severity, and may include:

- Headache
- Fatigue, Weakness, and Sleepiness
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea and Vomiting
- Lightheadedness and Dizziness
- Mental Confusion
- Visual Difficulty



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Severe CO poisoning causes loss of muscular coordination, brain damage, loss of consciousness, and ultimately death.

- When extremely high CO levels are present, confusion, incapacitation, and loss of consciousness can occur within minutes.

Make sure to have working carbon monoxide alarms in the home on every level and outside each separate sleeping area. CO alarms are designed to alarm before potentially life-threatening levels of carbon monoxide are reached.

- If you or anyone nearby begin to show symptoms of CO poisoning, or if the CO alarm sounds, get to a fresh air location immediately and then seek medical attention. Do not re-enter the area until it is determined to be safe by trained and properly equipped personnel.

Never use a generator indoors or in enclosed spaces such as garages, crawl spaces, sheds, or basements. Open windows and doors may not be enough to prevent CO from building up when a generator is located in an enclosed space.

Proper installation, operation, and maintenance of fuel-burning appliances in the home is the most important factor in reducing the risk of CO poisoning. Make sure appliances are installed and operated according to the manufacturer's instructions and local building codes.

- Fuel-burning heating equipment and chimneys should be inspected by a qualified professional every year.
- When using a fireplace, open the flue for adequate ventilation.

Carbon monoxide poisoning incidents are always more common during the winter due to the increased use of gas-powered furnaces and alternative heating, cooking, and power sources that are used improperly during cold temperatures and power outages.

- Never use your oven to heat your home. Do not use gas or charcoal grills inside the house.

If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage door is open.

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