

Recognizing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that is created when fuel burns. Any heating system or appliance that burns gas, oil, wood, propane or kerosene is a potential source of carbon monoxide.

Symptoms

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Nausea
- Rapid heartbeat
- Loss of hearing
- Blurry vision

Effects

Carbon monoxide prevents oxygen from being used in the body. It is poisonous and can cause harm to the central nervous system.

Who is at risk?

Everyone is at risk for carbon monoxide poisoning. Individuals with existing health problems such as heart disease and lung disease are especially vulnerable. The elderly, infants, children and pregnant women are also at high risk.

How can I decrease exposure?

- Have furnaces and fireplaces inspected for cracks, gaps, rust, corrosion or debris
- Have gas appliances serviced yearly
- Use non-electrical space heaters **ONLY** in well-ventilated areas
- Never start or leave cars, trucks or other vehicles running in an enclosed area
- Never operate outdoor grills indoors
- Never use stoves or ovens to heat a residence