Protect Your Family From Carbon Monoxide Exposure

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas with no odor, taste or smell. It can harm the health of anyone, even healthy people, by traveling through the bloodstream to the heart, lungs, and brain.

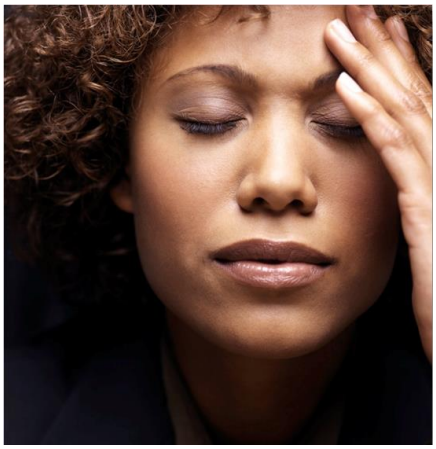
Where carbon monoxide comes from

- ✓ CO is produced when a fuel is not burned completely.
- ✓ Sources of CO may include:
  - -Gas ovens or stoves without exhaust fans
  - -Portable heaters that use kerosene or other gas
  - -Gas and charcoal grills and generators used indoors
  - -Cigarette smoking
  - -Exhaust from cars, trucks or other gas-powered machinery

Health effects of CO exposure

- ✓ Once CO is inhaled, it quickly travels through the body; the effects of CO poisoning can linger and recovery can take some time.
- ✓ Children, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with heart or lung illnesses are at greater risk.
- ✓ Common symptoms include: headaches, dizziness, nausea, loss of consciousness, death

  Symptoms can worsen with longer exposure.
- ✓ CO poisoning can be treated in a hospital with oxygen.



How to avoid exposure to CO in your home

- ✓ Gas stoves and ovens should **vent to the outside**.
- ✓ **Use the exhaust fan** over the stove when cooking. Clean the fan to prevent dirt from clogging it.
- ✓ Change gas furnace filters as recommended by the manufacturer.
- ✓ **Install CO alarms**.

Your CO alarm

- ✓ Put an alarm on each floor of the home; put one **outside the bedrooms.**
- ✓ Do not install the alarm directly above or next to stoves or heaters.
- ✓ If the alarm sounds, **go outside and get help**
- ✓ **Change the batteries** twice a year.
- ✓ Follow instructions for testing the alarm.
- ✓ Alarms usually last about 5 years.

DO NOT:

- X Use fuel burning appliances without ventilation
- X Use portable gas stoves indoors
- X Use the oven to heat your home
- X Smoke in your home
- X Use gas burning appliances within 20 feet of vents and doorways

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CEHS Center for Environmental Health and Susceptibility

NORTH CAROLINA HEALTHY HOMES

Resources

NC Healthy Homes; https://nchealthyhomes.com/carbon-monoxide/
NC Division of Public Health; https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/oee/a_z/co.html
Centers for Disease Control; https://www.cdc.gov/co/

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