

Symptoms

Carbon monoxide poisoning can mimic common illnesses, such as the flu. Initial symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning may include:

- Headache (most common)
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Confusion

If exposure is prolonged, symptoms may become more serious and include:

- Seizures
- Coma
- Death

Potential Clues:

- Pets in the household are also ill.
- You or other family members feel ill while at home, but feel better after leaving the house.



Call toll-free seven days a week.

www.wvpoisoncenter.org

The West Virginia Poison Center provides comprehensive emergency poison information, prevention, and educational resources to West Virginians 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Each call to the poison center is answered by a Specialist in Poison Information who is specially trained in the management of poisoning emergencies. The WVPC offers assessment and emergency treatment advice on accidental exposures to medications and household substances, plant ingestions, snake, spider and other insect bites and stings, chemicals spills, occupational exposures, and drug overdoses.



West Virginia University-Charleston Division

3110 MacCorkle Avenue SE

Charleston, WV 25304

(304) 347-1212 (Administrative Line)

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www.hsc.wvu.edu/icrc



Carbon Monoxide Poisoning: Not Just a Winter Killer

1-800-222-1222

What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced when fuels such as gasoline, propane, kerosene, natural gas, coal and wood do not have enough oxygen to burn completely. Its presence is not detectable by humans.

Sources

- Improperly vented gas furnaces
- Exhaust from vehicles and machinery
- Home water heaters
- Portable generators
- Pool heaters
- Recreational boating
- Wood stoves
- Kerosene heaters
- Charcoal fires
- Sterno fuel
- Fireplaces
- Smoking

Colorless
Odorless
Tasteless

Who is at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning?

Carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in America. All systems of the body can be affected by carbon monoxide poisoning. However, the brain and the heart are the most susceptible because they depend most heavily on oxygen to function.

Pregnant women must be especially careful in the event of overexposure. Carbon monoxide can affect the unborn child.

Newborns and the elderly are particularly susceptible to the effects of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Treatment

- Move everyone exposed to fresh air immediately.
- Call the West Virginia Poison Center.
- If anyone experiences loss of consciousness or seizures, call 911 immediately.

Prevention

- Have gas appliances checked annually by a professional.
- Avoid the use of kerosene heaters indoors or in tents.
- Do not use gas powered machinery in areas with poor ventilation.
- Never use a generator in an enclosed space, attached garage, or near open windows. Follow all manufacturer instructions for placement.
- Do not swim behind boats that have their engines or generators running.
- Never leave an automobile running in an enclosed garage.
- Ensure the car's tailpipe is clear of snow and other obstructions if anyone is inside of the vehicle.
- Never ride in the covered back of a pickup truck. Carbon monoxide can enter the enclosed space and reach dangerous levels in a very short time.
- Keep all chimneys and flues free of debris.
- ★ **Install a carbon monoxide detector in your home.**

If you have questions regarding carbon monoxide or other poisons, contact the West Virginia Poison Center at:

1-800-222-1222