

Reducing Your Risk

The key to preventing carbon monoxide poisoning is good preventive maintenance. All fuel-burning appliances, furnaces and fireplaces should be checked annually. However, even with good maintenance, problems may occur.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that every home have at least one carbon monoxide detector in the area near the bedrooms.

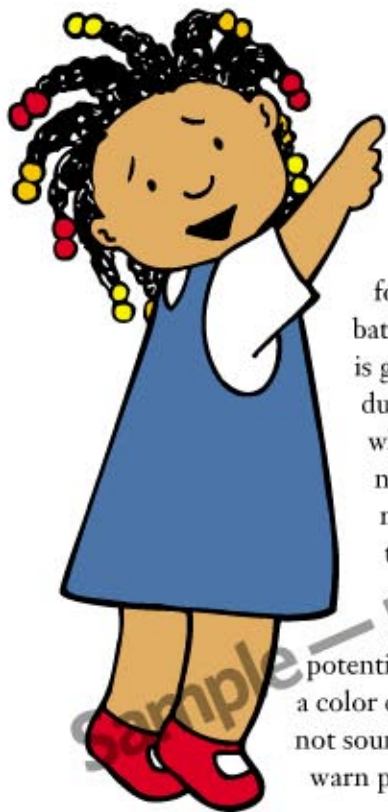
Carbon monoxide alarms are designed to warn you before the carbon monoxide concentration reaches dangerous levels.



The key to preventing carbon monoxide poisoning is good preventive maintenance.



Both electric and battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors are available for use in the home. A battery-operated detector is good for use in homes during electrical outages, while camping, or if you need a portable carbon monoxide detector while traveling. Do not use carbon monoxide detectors that warn potential victims solely through a color change. These sensors do not sound alarms, so they can't warn people who are sleeping.



If your carbon monoxide alarm sounds, do not treat it as a false alarm. False alarms are rare. If your alarm sounds:

- Account for all residents and pets, and move everyone to fresh air.
- If anyone is ill, contact emergency medical services immediately.
- Whenever possible, identify and eliminate the source of carbon monoxide.
- Contact your local poison center immediately from a neighbor's home or using a phone that is away from the carbon monoxide contamination.
- The poison center will advise you regarding the need for medical care and direct you to contact a certified heating and ventilation contractor, the gas company or fuel provider, or fire department for additional support if it is needed.

REMEMBER

The best way to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning is to have your heating system inspected yearly by a qualified heating contractor. The vent system and chimneys also should be inspected, repaired and replaced as necessary.

If you suspect a poisoning emergency, call your local poison center immediately at 1-800-222-1222.



Use Mr. Yuk to teach your children about poisons and how to contact your poison center.

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Carbon Monoxide

the silent killer



Carbon Monoxide— the Silent Killer

Approximately 5,000 deaths are caused by carbon monoxide poisoning every year. Carbon monoxide often is called the silent killer because it is lighter than air and you can't see it, smell it or taste it.

Carbon monoxide is formed when wood or a fossil fuel such as kerosene, natural gas, gasoline or coal is burned. If carbon monoxide is not vented properly, it can fill a room quickly and may result in tragedy. Although anyone can be poisoned by inhaling carbon monoxide, the unborn, young children, persons with respiratory illness, heart disease or anemia and the elderly are at greater risk.

Carbon monoxide poisons the body's cells and deprives them of oxygen. Mild exposure to carbon monoxide may cause flu-like symptoms including, a slight headache, nausea, vomiting and fatigue. More significant exposure may produce an intense throbbing headache, drowsiness, confusion and heart irregularities. An extreme exposure to carbon monoxide may cause convulsions, unconsciousness, heart failure, brain damage and death. The medical treatment for carbon monoxide poisoning will depend on the amount of carbon monoxide in the blood and the patient's symptoms.

Carbon monoxide poisoning
*usually occurs slowly over a period
of several hours.*

However,

*at very high concentrations,
carbon monoxide
can kill in minutes.*

Common Causes of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

**Some of the appliances and equipment
that produce carbon monoxide are:**

- Gas and oil furnaces, boilers and water heaters
- Gas, oil and kerosene space heaters
- Gas clothes dryers
- Gas and wood kitchen ranges, ovens and fireplaces
- Gasoline powered lawn mowers, snow blowers, chain saws and weed eaters
- Cars, trucks, motorcycles and mopeds
- Charcoal grills, candles and gas lanterns



Gas water heaters, dryers and oil burners must have flues that vent the carbon monoxide outside. Vent failure can be caused by venting systems or chimneys that were installed incorrectly; obstructions in chimneys, such as birds' nests or leaves; a deteriorating chimney; chimneys that are too short; a corroded flue; and appliances that are not equipped with a venting system.



**Some of the most common causes
of carbon monoxide poisoning are:**

- An obstructed chimney or flue
- A malfunctioning gas clothes dryer
- A wood burning fireplace or gas log burner that is not vented properly
- Any space heater that is not vented
- Old gas appliances, furnaces and water heaters that are malfunctioning or not vented properly
- Barbecue grills used indoors
- Pool and spa heaters that are not vented properly
- Automobile running in an open or closed garage

