

Poison Prevention Antidote



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Carbon Monoxide (CO) – The Invisible Killer

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For some, wintertime in Minnesota means it is time to go ice fishing on one of the frozen lakes. For others, it may mean staying indoors and enjoying a warm and cozy home while avoiding the cold. For the Poison Center, it is one of the best times of the year to go over the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning since many Minnesotans will be turning up the heat as temperatures drop.

Sources of CO

CO is an odorless and colorless gas so recognizing the sources of CO is a great first step in prevention. CO gas is created any time fuel is burned. It can build up indoors and poison people who breathe it. Below is a list of common sources of CO.

- Heating sources such as furnaces, generators, water heaters, wood and gas fireplaces and stoves
- Fuel-burning equipment and appliances such as car engines and kerosene heaters

Signs and Symptoms of CO Poisoning May Feel like the Flu

CO symptoms may feel like the flu and include the following symptoms:

- Headache, dizziness, fatigue
- Weakness, confusion, blurry vision
- Nausea and vomiting
- Chest pain

If you inhale too much CO it can make you pass out or even kill you. People who are sleeping or drunk can die from CO poisoning before experiencing any symptoms.

Tips to Prevent CO Poisoning

Install carbon monoxide detectors in your home and replace them every seven years and test them monthly to ensure they are working properly.

- Ice fishing houses with heating equipment should also have a carbon monoxide detector.
- Do not warm up your car inside your garage even if the door is open – remove it from your garage after starting it.
- Make sure the vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, fireplace, and the exhaust pipe of your car is not covered by snow.
- Get a professional to inspect your heating equipment and chimneys every year before winter.
- Ensure you open the flue to allow for proper ventilation if you are using your fireplace.
- Never use a gas grill or kerosene heater to warm up your home.

Don't Despair, Get in Fresh Air!

Do not ignore a CO alarm if it is sounding. Ensure you and others get into fresh air if anyone in your home experiences symptoms of CO poisoning. Then, call your local fire department to come check your home for safety. If everyone is feeling fine, you can call your local gas utility company instead.

Remember, you can always call the MN Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222 if you have any questions or concerns about carbon monoxide poisoning.

Upcoming Events

- 9/22: ACBC Food Distribution
- 9/23: Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View Fire Department Open House



Did You Know?

- Minnesota has Sophia's Law a carbon monoxide law for boaters.
- Motorboats, regardless of fuel type, with an enclosed accommodation compartment must be equipped with a functioning marine CO detector system installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- All gasoline-powered motorboats with any enclosed occupancy compartment must display three CO poisoning warning stickers as directed by law.
- Learn more: <https://youtu.be/ziOGxthAVos>

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1-800-222-1222 FOR EMERGENCIES OR QUESTIONS