



What happens with Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning?

When CO is inhaled at high concentrations, it displaces the oxygen from the hemoglobin in red blood cells. That means the body doesn't get the oxygen it needs. Symptoms of CO poisoning vary and may sound a lot like the flu — but there's no fever.

One clue may be a pattern of symptoms that occur in the same enclosed space, but that improve outside in fresh air. The most common complaint is headache. Other symptoms might be feeling tired, nauseated, dizzy, or short of breath. In more serious cases, this can progress to confusion, seizures, loss of consciousness, and death. The risks depend on your underlying health, the level of CO in the air (measured in parts per million, or ppm), and duration of exposure.

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING – WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

You can't see it, taste it or smell it but it can kill quickly and with no warning.



Here are some important dos and don'ts to help protect you and your family.

1. Do get CO detectors!

We cannot emphasize enough how important this is. Make sure you have CO detector (hard wired, battery-operated, or plug in – lots of options!!) on every floor, in the hallway, and each sleeping room. Ideally, change batteries yearly and test monitors monthly. Some CO detectors also provide a digital reading of the level of CO ppm. If the alarm sounds, don't ignore it. Move outside to fresh air and contact the fire department right away.

2. Do open the fireplace flue damper before lighting a fire, and leave it open until there are no embers and the ashes are cool. In addition, make sure the chimney and flue are clear before fireplace use.

3. Don't leave the car (or any other gas-powered motor) running in the garage.

Though it's tempting to warm up the car in the garage, don't do it, as CO levels can rise quickly. And if you have an attached garage, don't leave the engine running for very long even if the garage door is open, since CO can seep through wallboards and cracks in the doors into the house. Even leaving your car running outside close to a vent can make the numbers rise in your home. Be careful where you have engines running.

4. Do have your appliances and heating systems serviced as recommended?

Double check that your appliances and heating systems are working appropriately with proper ventilation. This includes making sure the vents are not blocked by snow and ice or any other item (trees, garbage cans, etc.)

5. Don't use generators or gas-powered motors indoors!

If you need to use a generator, make sure it is outside and at least 20 feet from windows and doors.
DO NOT USE GAS POWERED MOTORS IN YOUR HOME

6. Don't be scared to call 911. If you feel you have some sort of problem in your home, dial 911.

