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 getting into the heart, lungs, blood and brain.

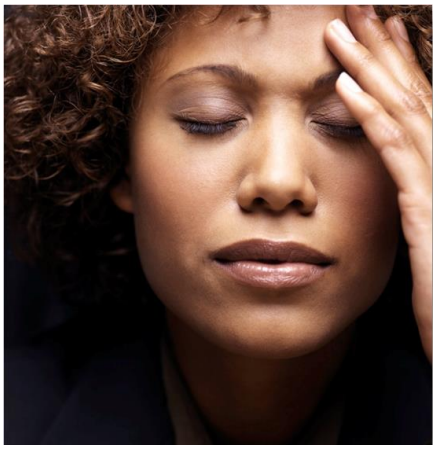
Where carbon monoxide comes from

- ✓ 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 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; it takes longer to exhale it than it took to inhale it.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ **Change the batteries** twice a year.
- ✓ Follow instructions for testing the alarm.
- ✓ If the alarm sounds, **go outside and get help**
- ✓ 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

CEHS Center for Environmental Health and Susceptibility

NORTH CAROLINA HEALTHY HOMES

Resources

NC Healthy Homes; http://bit.ly/DurhamCO
NC Division of Public Health; https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/oee/a_z/co.html
Centers for Disease Control; https://www.cdc.gov/co/

Funding to develop this material is provided by NIEHS (grant #P30ES010126).