

## How to Prevent **CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING**

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, tasteless gas that is created when fuel is burned. High levels of CO exposure can cause sudden illness or death. **You can prevent CO poisoning by installing a carbon monoxide detector. Learn about the sources and symptoms of CO exposure, and follow the tips below to avoid CO poisoning.**



According to the Centers for Disease Control, over 400 people die each year as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning.

### **Learn the sources of carbon monoxide.**

Carbon monoxide is produced when fuel such as natural gas, propane, gasoline, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned. Possible CO sources:

- Gas heating systems
- Gas stoves or gas ranges
- Grills, generators, and fuel-burning tools
- Fireplaces
- Furnaces
- Automobile and boat exhaust



CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces. When you breathe in CO, the toxic gas enters the bloodstream and keeps oxygen from getting into the body. Lack of oxygen can damage tissues and result in death.

### **Recognize the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.**

CO is often referred to as the “silent killer” because it is difficult to detect. Symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to the flu. Many people may unknowingly ignore the early signs of CO exposure.

Mild symptoms of CO poisoning:

- Headache
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Nausea or vomiting



Severe symptoms of CO poisoning:

- Confusion and irritability
- Impaired judgment and blurred vision
- Unconsciousness

Anyone can be at risk for CO poisoning. Those who are most at risk include:

- Fetuses and infants
- Pregnant women
- Elderly adults
- People with heart disease, lung disease, or anemia

## Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning in your home with these simple steps.

- Install a CO detector outside of every room used for sleeping. Install it within 10 feet of the room's entryway.
- Test the CO detector monthly.
- Open flues when fireplaces are in use.
- Have gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced frequently.
- **DO NOT** use gas ovens or gas ranges to heat living areas.
- **DO NOT** use unvented gas or kerosene space heaters in enclosed spaces.
- **DO NOT** leave a motor vehicle running in an enclosed garage.
- **DO NOT** run a generator or other gas appliance inside an enclosed space without ventilation

## Act quickly if you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning.

1. Go outside to fresh air immediately.
2. Seek immediate medical attention or dial 911 for symptoms of CO poisoning.
3. **DO NOT** re-enter the home until it is safe.
4. Contact your gas utility company to identify the CO source and make repairs.



CO alarms can be hard-wired, battery powered, or plug-in devices. Make sure that alarms are UL listed. Follow the package instructions for proper placement, use, and maintenance.

## For More Information

**Georgia Department of Public Health**

Environmental Health Section

Chemical Hazards Program

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[www.dph.georgia.gov/chemical-hazards](http://www.dph.georgia.gov/chemical-hazards)

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