



Commission on Affairs of the Elderly

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What you should know about Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide is a highly toxic gas that is VERY HARD TO DETECT! It is:

- Colorless
- Odorless
- Taste less
- Sometimes combines with other gases that have sharp odors
- Found where heating equipment ventilation problems exist and in automobile exhaust

Danger signs that you may be at risk for carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Stuffy, stale or smelly air
- Very high humidity
- Fallen soot from the fireplace or furnace
- No draft in chimney or hot draft backing out

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include one or more of the following:

- Headaches
- Weakness
- Vomiting
- Tightening of the chest
- Redness of skin
- Sleepiness
- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Loss of muscle control
- Convulsions
- Stinging of eyes
- Fluttering of the heart
- Ringing of the ears

Prolonged exposure can lead to Unconsciousness, Brain Damage, or Death

Take Action! If you experience the danger signs or symptoms of poisoning:

- Open windows and doors
- Evacuate everyone Immediately
- From a neighbor's house –
 - Call the local fire department
 - Your oil dealer for oil-burning equipment
 - Your gas company for gas burning equipment

Preventative measures for Carbon Monoxide buildup:

- Malfunctioning heating equipment – have appliances checked annually; periodically check burner for hot draft backing out
- Blocked chimneys due to fallen leaves, bird's nests, fossil fuel buildup – check your chimney and furnace every fall for buildup; have your chimney cleaned annually

- Enclosed heating equipment with limited ventilation – if your home undergoes any major renovation and you have heavy insulation or if you enclose heating equipment to gain additional living space – *Check to see if extra ventilation is needed*
- Sitting inside a motionless vehicle for a long period of time with the motor running – have your vehicle’s muffler and tailpipes inspected regularly for carbon monoxide leaks
- *Do not* use barbeque grills indoors, stoves or ovens for heating purposes, or repair engines without proper ventilation

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