

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas that is hard to detect and can cause illness or possibly death before you know it's there. Carbon monoxide comes from incomplete combustion of gas or oil-fired appliances such as furnaces, dryers, wood-burning stoves, fireplaces, and car engines. A high percentage of carbon monoxide poisonings are from home heating systems that are not properly installed or maintained.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are often mistaken for those accompanying the flu, which include headache, nausea, confusion, dizzy spells, and fatigue. If you feel the effects of carbon monoxide poisoning, go outside to fresh air immediately and seek medical attention. Remember to call 911 to report a carbon monoxide leak as well as any exposure symptoms.

Here are some tips to avoid carbon monoxide poisoning in your home:

- Make sure that all home heating appliances are installed according to the manufacturer's instructions. Be sure to have it checked each year by a certified technician before the temperature outside starts to drop.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector in the hallway near the bedrooms and on every level of the home. Make sure that everyone in the household knows the sound of the carbon monoxide detector and the smoke detector. If the carbon monoxide detector goes off, don't ignore it; hit the reset feature on your detector and if it goes off again, evacuate immediately and call 911.
- Never use gasoline-powered tools and engines (such as generators) indoors. Generators should be placed outdoors away from the structure in a well-ventilated area.
- Do not burn charcoal or use portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a house, garage, vehicle, or tent.
- Avoid using gas appliances such as ranges, ovens, or clothes dryers to heat your home.
- If you have to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it and make sure that the exhaust pipe is not obstructed.
- When using the fireplace, remember to open the flue for adequate ventilation.