

Protecting you and your Family from Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

What is Carbon Monoxide (CO)?

A colorless, odorless gas. At high levels it can kill a person in minutes.

What produces CO?

Any time fuels like gas, natural gas, oil, kerosene, wood or charcoal is burned, CO is produced. If appliances that burn fuel are maintained and used properly, the amount of CO produced is usually not hazardous. However, if appliances are not working properly or are used incorrectly, dangerous levels of CO can result. Hundreds of people die accidentally every year from CO poisoning caused by malfunctioning or improperly used fuel-burning appliances.

What are the symptoms of CO Poisoning?

Low levels cause shortness of breath, mild nausea, mild headaches, At moderate levels you or your family would experience severe headaches, dizziness, become mentally confused, feeling nauseated, or fainting. If exposed to high doses, or for long periods of time, CO poisoning can cause death.

What do I do if I suspect that I have CO poisoning?

Get to fresh air as quickly as possible.

Call 911

Go to an emergency room.

How do I avoid CO Poisoning? Prevention is Key!!!

Do- have your fuel-burning appliances, oil and gas furnaces, gas water heaters, gas ranges and ovens, gas dryers or kerosene space heaters, fireplaces, and wood stoves, inspected by a trained professional at the beginning of every heating season. Make certain that the flues and chimneys are connected, in good condition, and not blocked.

Do- choose appliances that vent their fumes to the outside, have them properly installed, and maintain them according to manufactures instructions.

Do- read and follow all of the instructions that accompany any fuel-burning device. Do not use fuel-burning devices inside that are designed for outside use only. Carefully follow the cautions that come with the device.

Don't- idle the car in a garage, even if the garage door is open.

Don't- use a gas oven to heat your home, even if for a short time.

Don't- ever use a charcoal grill indoors, even if in a fireplace.

Don't- sleep in any room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater.

Don't- use any gasoline-powered engines in enclosed spaces.

Don't'- ignore symptoms, particularly if more than one person is feeling them.

You could loose consciousness and die if you do nothing.

How do I know if there is CO in my home?

There are many different types of CO detectors available for you to purchase for your home. Each detector is designed differently, so to find the right detector for your home you must read the manufactures instructions.

What do I do if my CO detector goes off?

Make sure it is your CO detector and not your smoke detector.

Check to see if any member of the household is experiencing symptoms of poisoning.

If they are, get them and everyone else in the house out immediately and seek medical attention. Call 911

Be sure to tell the doctor that you suspect CO poisoning.

If no one is feeling symptoms, ventilate the home with fresh air, turn of all potential sources of CO.

Have a qualified technician inspect your fuel-burning appliances and chimneys to make sure they are operation correctly and that there is nothing blocking the fumes from being vented out of the house.

Pacific Gas and Electric Company provides a free service to check and adjust your home gas appliances. Please call 1-800-PGE-5000 if you would like your gas appliances checked.