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Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning

What is carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning? The poisoning happens when you breathe too much carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide is a gas produced by burning any type of fuel-gas, oil, kerosene, wood or charcoal. What makes this gas so dangerous is that when you breathe it, it replaces the oxygen in your blood. Without oxygen, cells throughout the body die, and the organs stop working. *WebMD*

Symptoms of Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning

Early symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include: headache, dizziness, nausea. As carbon monoxide builds up in your blood, symptoms get worse and may include: confusion and drowsiness, fast breathing, fast heartbeat, or chest pain, vision problems or seizures. If you have symptoms that you think could be caused by CO poisoning, leave the area right away, and call 911 or go to the emergency room. If you keep breathing the fumes, you may pass out and die. *WebMD*

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Safety

Often called the silent killer, carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, colorless gas created when fuels burn incompletely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel can be sources of carbon monoxide.

- CO alarms should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for placement and mounting height.
- Choose a CO alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Call your local fire department's non-emergency number to find out what number to call if the CO alarm sounds.
- Test CO alarms at least once a month; replace them according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- If the audible trouble signal sounds, check for low batteries. If the battery is low, replace it. If it still sounds, call the fire department.
- If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow.
- During and after a snowstorm, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.
- A generator should be used in a well-ventilated location outdoors away from windows, doors and vent openings.
- Gas or charcoal grills can produce CO – only use outside.

A person can be poisoned by a small amount of CO over a longer period of time or by a large amount of CO over a shorter amount of time.