

## Safety Tips

**T**he best way to reduce your risk of exposure to carbon monoxide poisoning is to do **preventive maintenance**. Have your fuel burning appliances, furnaces and fireplaces inspected annually by a qualified contractor.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that every home have at least one carbon monoxide detector in the area near the bedrooms. Carbon monoxide alarms are designed to warn you before the CO concentration reaches dangerous levels.

Be sure to use a detector that sounds an alarm. Detectors that only change color cannot warn people while they are sleeping.

If you suspect CO is leaking into the house, contact your local fire department, gas company or heating contractor right away.

**Remember:** If you are exposed to carbon monoxide:

- Account for all residents and pets and move everyone to fresh air.
- Check for breathing patterns.

**If the person is unconscious or not breathing call 911 immediately**

- Administer artificial respiration if necessary.

Otherwise . . .

Call the  
Poison Control Center



HUDSON VALLEY  
POISON EDUCATION CENTER  
at Phelps Memorial Hospital Center  
701 North Broadway  
Sleepy Hollow, NY 10591

Phone: 914-366-3577  
Fax: 914-366-1512  
Email: [PoisonEdu@pmhc.us](mailto:PoisonEdu@pmhc.us)  
[www.PoisonEducation.org](http://www.PoisonEducation.org)

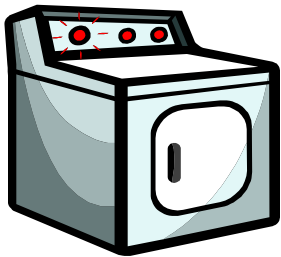
## Carbon Monoxide: The Silent Killer



HUDSON VALLEY  
POISON EDUCATION CENTER  
at Phelps Memorial  
Hospital Center

You can't see it, smell it or taste it.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that is potentially deadly. It is produced as a by-product from the incomplete burning of carbon-containing fuels such as, wood, oil, natural gas, kerosene, coal and gasoline. If carbon monoxide is not properly vented, it can quickly fill a room and can poison anyone that inhales the gas. The unborn, young children, the elderly and persons with respiratory illness, heart disease or anemia are particularly at risk for carbon monoxide poisoning.

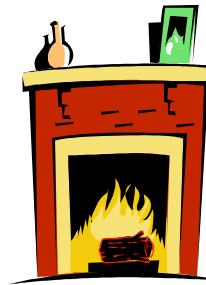


Carbon monoxide is the leading cause of fatalities for all accidental poisonings.

## Common Causes

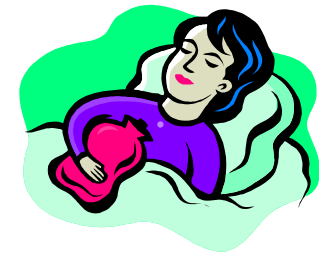
Some of the most common causes of carbon monoxide poisoning are:

- An obstructed chimney or flue
- Non-properly vented gas or wood burning fireplaces
- Portable space heaters that are not vented
- Malfunctioning clothes dryers
- Improperly installed kitchen stove-top vents
- Malfunctioning water heaters, boilers or furnaces
- Barbecue grills used indoors (both charcoal and propane)
- Automobiles running in a garage
- Snow blocking the exhaust pipe of a car
- Gas-powered generators



## Signs and Symptoms

When CO is inhaled, it attaches to the hemoglobin in the blood stream and displaces the oxygen that the body needs. The end result is oxygen starvation. Initial symptoms of CO poisoning may be mistaken for flu symptoms. Depending on how long and how much CO has been inhaled, you may experience headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, loss of muscle control, shortness of breath, chest tightness, fluttering of the heart, confusion and slowed reaction time.



CO poisoning should be suspected if more than one family member is sick and if they feel better after being away from home for a period of time.