

## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is odorless, colorless, and tasteless. Carbon monoxide poisoning occurs more often in the winter months. This occurs when people use their gas stove to heat the home. Carbon monoxide is produced by any device that burns fuel. Approximately 500 Americans die annually from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning, and approximately 5,000 are treated for exposure at area hospitals. To reduce the chance of accidental exposure a carbon monoxide detector should be installed in the home.

Carbon monoxide fumes build up where there is poor ventilation particularly in an enclosed area. The following is a list of items that can produce such deadly fumes:

- Exhaust from cars / trucks.
- Gas stoves.
- Gas ranges.
- Kerosene lanterns.
- Burning charcoal.
- Wood burning stove.
- Fireplace chimney.
- Gas burning generators.
- Any type of fuel burning appliance.
- Hot water heater.

Carbon monoxide binds to our hemoglobin 200 times faster than oxygen when the exposure is high enough, you can develop these symptoms from exposure to carbon monoxide:

- Headache.
- Dizziness.
- Nausea / vomiting.
- Cherry red skin.
- Confusion / Stupor.
- Loss of conscious.
- Possible death.

Everyone is at risk of exposure, however, people with low red blood cell counts, heart or respiratory ailments as well as infants are at a higher risk.

To further reduce the chances of you or a loved one becoming overcome by carbon monoxide poisoning follow these preventive tips:

- Never heat your home with a gas stove /gas range.
- Never use a charcoal grill or a hibachi in your home.
- Never use a gas powered generator or a gas powered machine in the home or basement.
- Make sure all fuel burning appliances are properly installed and maintained by a certified technician.
- Never use a gas powered machine by an open window (fumes can seep into the home).
- Always clear exhaust pipes from automobiles and trucks during snowstorms.
- Make sure fireplace, chimneys and flues are checked and cleaned every year.
- Never sit in a car or leave it running in a closed garage.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector in your home and check it regularly to make sure the battery is working.

In the event you become ill from carbon monoxide poisoning move yourself to fresh air and call 911. Follow instructions from operator and await the help of a trained medical professional.