

# Carbon Monoxide Can Be Deadly

You can't see or smell carbon monoxide, but at high levels it can kill a person in minutes. Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced whenever any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned. 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.

## Symptoms of CO poisoning:

- At moderate levels, you or your family can experience:
  - Severe headaches
  - Dizziness
  - Mental confusion
  - Nausea
  - Fainting
  - You can even die if these levels persist for a long time
- Low levels symptoms may include:
  - Shortness of breath
  - Mild nausea
  - Mild headaches
  - May have longer term effects on your health

Since many of these symptoms are similar to those of the flu, food poisoning, or other illnesses, you may not think that CO poisoning could be the cause.

## Actions to Take:

If you experience symptoms that you think could be from CO poisoning:

- **Get fresh air immediately.** Open doors and windows; turn off combustion appliances and *leave the house*.
- **Go to an emergency room** *and tell the physician you suspect CO poisoning.* If CO poisoning has occurred, it can often be diagnosed by a blood test done soon after exposure.

**For the latest information about CO poisoning or a list of frequently asked questions, click on one of these links:** <http://www.carbonmonoxidekills.com/> or <http://www.cdc.gov/co/faqs.htm>