



# CARBON MONOXIDE

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [more than 400 Americans die](#) from accidental carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning every year. CO is a gas that is odorless and colorless, and it can be fatal if too much is inhaled. CO poisoning can be prevented by watching for symptoms, testing CO alarms in your home and regularly checking common CO producers for leaks, blockages or faults.

## COMMON SOURCES

Multiple household items can produce CO. Proper ventilation, operation and maintenance are important in making sure these items remain useful and do not become harmful. Some of the most common causes of household CO poisoning include:

- A clogged chimney
- A gas or wood-burning furnace
- A vehicle running in a closed garage
- Portable kerosene or gas heaters
- A gas or charcoal grill used indoors or in a closed garage
- Improperly installed kitchen range or vent
- A cracked or loose furnace exchanger
- A corroded or disconnected water heater vent pipe

## POISONING SYMPTOMS

CO poisoning symptoms are described as being flu-like. Individuals suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning may show one or more of the following symptoms:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Upset stomach
- Vomiting
- Chest pain
- Confusion

## PREVENTION TIPS

You can protect yourself and family from the harmful effects of CO poisoning at home by:

- Installing CO alarms outside each sleeping area and on every floor of your home
- Testing each alarm monthly to ensure the batteries are still working, and replacing each alarm with a new one every five years
- Exiting your home immediately after a CO alarm goes off and calling emergency personnel to check all fuel-burning equipment
- Parking running vehicles in driveways or on the street to keep CO from building up in your home and garage
- Checking dryer, furnace and stove vents regularly for debris blockage
- Never using home appliances, such as ovens, as an alternative-heating source
- Never using generators indoors or within 20 feet of any door, window or vent
- Having fuel and charcoal-powered equipment regularly inspected by a professional to verify they are operating properly

