



Regional Center for Poison Control and Prevention

Serving Massachusetts and Rhode Island



What is Carbon Monoxide (CO)?

Carbon Monoxide is a highly toxic gas produced when fuel (kerosene, oil, coal, petroleum gas, and wood) is burned. It is colorless, odorless and tasteless – which makes it very hard to detect.

What are sources of CO ?

- Oil, wood, or gas furnaces/boilers
- Space heaters (kerosene heaters)
- Gas or oil water heaters
- Gas stoves
- Gas dryers
- Fireplaces and wood stoves
- Charcoal grills
- Automobiles
- Lawn mowers, leaf blowers, snowmobiles, and other gas powered equipment

Common symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to the flu. They can include:

Headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, loss of muscle control, tightening of the chest, convulsions, redness of the eyes, sleepiness, fluttering of the heart, confusion, and/or ringing in the ear.

If you suspect CO poisoning. . .

1. Evacuate everyone immediately to fresh air.
2. Call the **Regional Poison Control Center** at **1-800-222-1222**.
3. Call the local fire department, your oil dealer for oil-burning equipment, or your gas company for gas-burning appliances.

How can you prevent CO poisoning?

- Have your vehicle's muffler and tailpipe inspected regularly. During the winter check your tailpipe for blockage due to snow or ice.
- Never leave a car running in the garage. Never sleep in a car with the engine running.
- Repair gas powered engines (lawnmowers, snow blowers, vehicles, etc.) in a space with proper ventilation.
- Have heating appliances installed and serviced by professionals on a regular basis.
- Install a Carbon Monoxide detector in your home and garage.
- Clean your chimney/furnace every fall and check for blockage such as leaves or animal's nests.
- Check if extra ventilation is needed when:
 - Your home undergoes any major renovation.
 - You enclose heating equipment to gain additional living space.
- Never burn charcoal in an enclosed space such as in your home, garage, or tent.
- Do not use the oven or gas range to heat your home.
- Turn off space heaters and put out the fire in the fireplace/wood stove when sleeping.

24-HOUR POISON HOTLINE 1-800-222-1222