

Each year hundreds of people experience what they think are the symptoms of flu: headaches, fatigue, nausea, and dizziness. These are actually symptoms of CO poisoning as well.

SOME RECOVER... SOME DIE

Why?

**SCRATCH AND SNIFF
HERE**

Smell anything?
CO is odorless.

What is carbon monoxide (CO)?

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that can kill you if inhaled. You can not see it, smell it, or taste it. It is sometimes called the "silent killer" because it can take your life without warning. Most people that die in home fires die at night, while they are asleep. They don't wake up because the CO puts them into a deeper sleep. They are unable to respond and escape.

Why is it deadly?

When air containing CO is inhaled, it displaces oxygen in the bloodstream. It reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen to vital organs such as the heart and brain. In addition to flu-like symptoms, it can cause vomiting, loss of consciousness, brain damage and/or death. Unborn babies, infants, senior citizens, and people with heart and breathing problems are at an especially high risk.

ALWAYS REMEMBER YOUR COMPREHENSIVE HOME FIRE SAFETY PROGRAM

Have working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Have and practice a home escape plan.

GET OUT! STAY OUT!



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**Carbon monoxide
is a stealthy
KILLER**



What are symptoms of CO poisoning?

The symptoms of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning are flu-like, including headache, fatigue, nausea, dizziness, and confusion. Prolonged exposure can result in vomiting, blackouts, and eventually, brain damage and death. The amount of CO inhaled and how long you are exposed determines the effect.

What can be done to prevent CO poisoning?

- Make sure appliances are installed according to the manufacturer's instructions and by professionals.
- Have heating systems inspected and serviced at least once a year.
- Make sure chimneys and vents are checked for blockages, corrosion, and loose connections.
- Open flues completely when fireplaces are in use.
- Use proper fuel in space heaters.
- Never burn charcoal or a barbecue grill inside a home or enclosed space.
- Never use portable fuel-burning camping equipment inside a home, garage, vehicle, or tent.
- Never leave a car, mower, or other such item running in an attached garage, even with the garage door open.
- Never operate unvented fuel-burning appliances in any room where people are sleeping.
- Never use the kitchen range for heating a house.
- Never run a gas-powered generator in a garage, basement, or near any overhang on the home. Keep it at a distance.

How can I tell if CO is present in my home?

Since carbon monoxide is colorless, odorless, and tasteless, the best way to alert your family is to install a carbon monoxide detector/alarm to warn of the gas's build-up.

Where does CO come from?

CO is a product of incomplete combustion. Any fuel-burning device has the potential to produce dangerous levels of CO gas. Examples of common devices that may emit CO include:

- Fuel-fired furnaces (not electric)
- Gas water heaters
- Fireplaces and wood stoves
- Gas stoves
- Non-electric space heaters
- Gas dryers
- Charcoal grills
- Lawnmowers, snowblowers, etc.
- Automobiles
- Gas powered generators



When should you replace your CO detector?

If you wonder if your carbon monoxide detectors are worn out, they probably are. CO detectors only have a five to ten-year life depending on the manufacturer's recommendation. Listing a production date or an expiration date on the label is a fairly new phenomenon. If there is no date on yours and you can not remember when you bought it, you are probably due for a new one.

Carbon Monoxide alarms are required by law!

Illinois requires carbon monoxide alarms. Homeowners and landlords throughout Illinois are required by law to install CO detectors.

Public Act 094-0741 requires every dwelling be equipped with at least one approved carbon monoxide alarm, in operating condition, within 15 feet of every sleeping room. This alarm may be battery operated, plug-in with battery back-up or wired into the home's AC power with a secondary battery back-up. Approved alarms bear the label of a nationally recognized testing laboratory and comply with the most recent standards of the Underwriters Laboratories or the Canadian Standard Association.

Where should CO detectors be installed?

CO is almost identical in weight to air and thus mixes freely in it. For this reason, alarms may be installed at any level in a room.

If the detector is being mounted on a ceiling, it should be installed away from existing smoke alarms in order to be able to distinguish between the CO and smoke alarms in an emergency.

Every home should be equipped with at least one CO alarm near the sleeping area. For maximum protection, additional alarms should be located on each level of your home.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THE CO DETECTOR SOUNDS?

If your CO detector goes off and you feel ill, leave the house and call **9-1-1**. If you do not feel ill, push your detector's reset button. If the alarm goes off again after a few minutes, open the windows, leave the house and call **9-1-1**.