

# Protect Your Family From Carbon Monoxide Exposure

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas with no odor, taste or smell. It can harm the health of anyone, even healthy people, by traveling through the bloodstream to the heart, lungs, and brain.

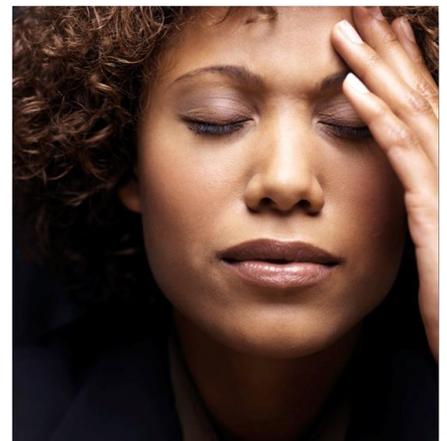


## Where carbon monoxide comes from

- ✓ CO is produced when a fuel is not burned completely.
- ✓ Sources of CO may include:
  - Gas ovens or stoves without exhaust fans
  - Portable heaters that use kerosene or other gas
  - Gas and charcoal grills and generators used indoors
  - Cigarette smoking
  - Exhaust from cars, trucks or other gas-powered machinery

## Health effects of CO exposure

- ✓ Once CO is inhaled, it quickly travels through the body; the effects of CO poisoning can linger and recovery can take some time.
  - ✓ Children, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with heart or lung illnesses are at greater risk.
  - ✓ Common symptoms include: headaches, dizziness, nausea, loss of consciousness, death
- Symptoms can worsen with longer exposure.
- ✓ CO poisoning can be treated in a hospital with oxygen.



## How to avoid exposure to CO in your home

- ✓ Gas stoves and ovens should **vent to the outside**.
- ✓ **Use the exhaust fan** over the stove when cooking. Clean the fan to prevent dirt from clogging it.
- ✓ Change gas furnace filters as recommended by the manufacturer.
- ✓ **Install CO alarms.**

## Your CO alarm

- ✓ Put an alarm on each floor of the home; put one **outside the bedrooms**.
- ✓ Do not install the alarm directly above or next to stoves or heaters.
- ✓ If the alarm sounds, **go outside and get help**
- ✓ **Change the batteries** twice a year.
- ✓ Follow instructions for testing the alarm.
- ✓ Alarms usually last about 5 years.



## DO NOT:

- X Use fuel burning appliances without ventilation
- X Use portable gas stoves indoors
- X Use the oven to heat your home
- X Smoke in your home
- X Use gas burning appliances within 20 feet of vents and doorways

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## Resources

NC Healthy Homes; <https://nchealthyhomes.com/carbon-monoxide/>  
NC Division of Public Health; [https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/oe/a\\_z/co.html](https://epi.dph.ncdhhs.gov/oe/a_z/co.html)  
Centers for Disease Control; <https://www.cdc.gov/co/>

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