

# You Can Prevent Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning

Patrick Lynch, MPH

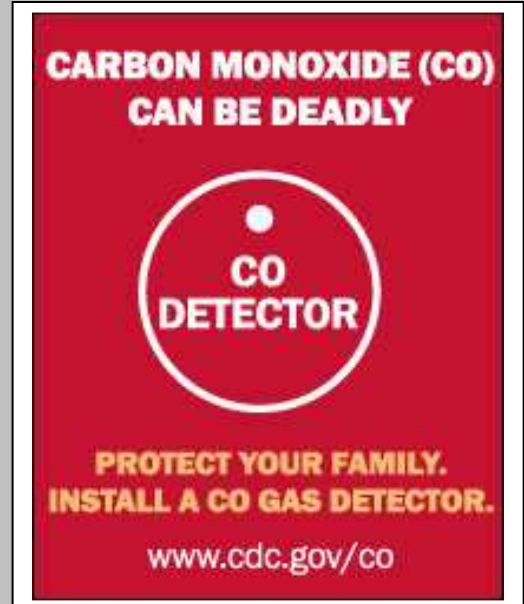
## What is it?

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning is sometimes referred to as the "Silent Killer." CO gas by itself is odorless and colorless. This is different than chlorine gas which has a distinct smell and a yellow haze.

CO is a byproduct typically given off by furnaces, vehicles, portable generators, stoves, lanterns, gas ranges, or burning charcoal or wood. CO can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. Inhalation of CO in these enclosed spaces can result in poisoning and may even cause death.

## Symptoms

The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol can die from CO poisoning before ever having symptoms.



## Do' and Don'ts of CO Poisoning Prevention

- **Do** have your heating system, water heater and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- **Do** install a battery-operated CO detector in your home and check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. If the detector sounds leave your home immediately and call 911.
- **Do** seek prompt medical attention if you suspect CO poisoning and are feeling dizzy, light-headed, or nauseous.
- **Don't** use a generator, charcoal grill, camp stove, or other kerosene, gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside your home, basement, or garage or near a window.
- **Don't** run a car or truck inside a garage attached to your house, even if you leave the garage door open.
- **Don't** burn anything in a stove or fireplace that isn't vented.
- **Don't** heat your house with a gas oven.

**CO poisoning is entirely preventable.** Protect yourself and loved ones by acting wisely and learning the symptoms of CO poisoning. For more information on CO poisoning, please visit:

<http://www.cdc.gov/co/default.htm>