



September 28, 2023

CARBON MONOXIDE EXPOSURE RISKS AND PREVENTION

The Michigan Poison & Drug Information Center (MiPDC) has poison prevention tips to keep your household safe as the cooler weather sets in.

Carbon monoxide production results when a carbon-based fuel (gas, propane, natural gas, wood, charcoal) does not burn completely in a furnace, water heater, grill, generator, or internal combustion engine. **Carbon monoxide is colorless and odorless and therefore cannot be seen or sensed.** People exposed to carbon monoxide may feel as if they have a cold or the flu. It should be especially worrisome when a group of people have the same complaints at the same time. They may complain of:

- Headaches
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Tiredness
- Confusion
- Muscle aches and pains

DO NOT ignore these symptoms. Symptoms can quickly become worse and lead to death. Call **911** immediately if there is any risk of exposure to carbon monoxide. If you are in your home and experience symptoms that may be related to carbon monoxide exposure, evacuate everyone from your home and leave doors and windows open while waiting for Emergency Medical Services to arrive.

Infants, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with chronic health issues have a greater risk for complications with exposure to carbon monoxide. Check on those at higher risk for complications and assure safety measures are in place. Working carbon monoxide detectors should be installed on every floor of a home.

Yearly servicing for gas furnaces is recommended. If you have not had your furnace inspected or serviced within the last 12 months, now is the time to do so. If the power goes out and you need to run a gas-powered backup generator, the MiPDC urges everyone to run generators safely. Do not run gas generators in your home or garage or within twenty feet of buildings.

In addition to properly maintaining your gas furnace, using gas-powered generators safely, and having working carbon monoxide detector in your home, remember the following safety tips.

- Avoid using kerosene space heaters in homes or enclosed areas.
- Do not leave cars running in a garage, especially if the garage is attached to your home.
- Do not run outdoor grills inside or near your home.
- Do not attempt to heat your home by use of a gas oven or range.

To learn more about carbon monoxide safety, visit mipoisonhelp.org and click on the “Education” tab for Fall Safety Educational Resources. Click on the Safety Education tab for “Seasonal and Holiday Poison Prevention” for more resources.

If you have more questions about carbon monoxide poisoning, please call:

Michigan Poison & Drug Information Center

1-800-222-1222

Available 24/7/365

www.mipoisonhelp.org