



HEALTH AWARENESS

Protect Your Family From Carbon Monoxide

(NAPSA)—When people think of unintentional poisonings, the toxic products stashed under the kitchen sink often come to mind. But there is one life-threatening poison that parents may not think about—carbon monoxide (CO).

Carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in America, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), claiming 400 lives and injuring another 20,000 each year.

Colorless, odorless and tasteless, it is often called “the Silent Killer.” The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, nausea and dizziness. Since these symptoms are similar to those of the flu, CO poisoning may be dismissed as a virus. Unfortunately, the consequences of doing so may be tragic.

“Young children are especially vulnerable to the effects of CO. Due to their smaller bodies, children process CO differently than adults and may be more severely affected by carbon monoxide in their blood,” said Alan Korn, executive director for Safe Kids USA.

CDC reports show that from 2004 to 2006, children age 5 and younger had the highest estimated rate of CO-related emergency department visits among all age groups.

Common household appliances, such as a furnace or water heater, are potential CO poisoning sources. When these or other fuel-burning devices malfunction or are used improperly, carbon monoxide can quickly build up inside a home, causing injury or even death.

So how can families be sure the silent killer isn’t lurking in their

About Carbon Monoxide (CO)

- Odorless, colorless, deadly gas
- Leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths
- Can be produced by any fuel-burning appliance
- Symptoms of CO poisoning can mimic the flu

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



home? Install a carbon monoxide alarm. It’s the only safe way to detect this poisonous gas.

In fact, many state leaders have recognized the importance of having a working carbon monoxide alarm. Currently, 24 states require CO alarms in certain residences. In addition, families can take these simple steps to reduce the chance of having a CO incident:

- Install a carbon monoxide alarm outside every sleeping area and on every level of your home.
- Place CO alarms at least 15 feet away from fuel-burning appliances to reduce nuisance alarms.
- Test alarms each month and replace them every seven years.
- Have all gas-, oil- or coal-burning appliances inspected by a technician every year to ensure they are working properly.
- Never use a stove to heat your home.
- Do not use a grill, generator or camping stove inside your home or garage or near a window.
- Never leave a car, SUV or motorcycle engine running inside a garage, even if the garage door is open.

For more information on carbon monoxide poisoning as well as other home safety tips, visit www.safekids.org.