

# Carbon Monoxide (CO)

**Consumers Energy**

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## FACTS

- **Carbon Monoxide (CO)** is known as the silent killer because it is invisible – odorless, colorless and tasteless.
- CO is a **toxic gas** produced by the incomplete burning of fuels including oil, propane, coal, wood, natural gas, gasoline, diesel fuel, charcoal and kerosene. Faulty or inadequately vented appliances that use these fuels – such as furnaces, fireplaces, wood stoves, charcoal grills, kerosene heaters as well as gasoline-powered generators and vehicles – can produce deadly amounts of CO.
- Some warning signs of CO can include **stale/stuffy air, excessive moisture on windows and walls and soot buildup around appliance vents.**
- **Symptoms of CO often mimic the “flu”** and include headaches, nausea, fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath and stinging or burning of the eyes. Prolonged exposure can cause disorientation, convulsions, unconsciousness (coma) and eventually death.
- Infants, the elderly and people with respiratory problems are especially susceptible to **CO poisoning**. When CO is breathed into the body, **carbon monoxide combines with the blood and prevents it from absorbing oxygen.**

## 5 SAFETY TIPS

- 1** **Install an audible carbon monoxide alarm** that meets or exceeds Underwriters Laboratory standards and will alarm if dangerous levels of carbon monoxide are created.
- 2** **Inspect your furnace** annually and have it tuned up by a qualified service professional.
- 3** **Change furnace air filters** at least once every other month during the heating season.
- 4** **Perform a visual inspection** of any vent pipes to make sure they are free of obstructions such as leaves and nests.
- 5** **When using generators, be sure they have been connected by a licensed electrician** and are only operated where there is adequate ventilation. Never use a generator in an enclosed space.

For more information, visit [ConsumersEnergy.com/cosafety](http://ConsumersEnergy.com/cosafety)