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Carbon Monoxide – Know the Facts

With several recent tragedies in our community from carbon monoxide poisoning, I would like to take the time to elaborate on why this gas is so deadly. Carbon monoxide poisoning is the number one cause of accidental poisoning deaths in North America. The deadly gas attaches itself to hemoglobin (red blood cells), which decreases the bodies' ability to carry oxygen. Carbon monoxide is particularly dangerous as it can't be seen, smelled or tasted. Places that are particularly prone to gas leaks are; near gas or oil furnaces, clothing dryers, ovens and wood stoves, space and water heaters, and appliances which run on fossil fuels.

Carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms are very similar to the flu in low concentrations. Early warning signs of low-level poisoning include tiredness, headaches, dizziness, nausea or vomiting and shortness of breath. Your skin may also turn pink or red in response to rising blood pressure.

Carbon Monoxide CO (ppm)	Carbon Monoxide in Air (%)	Symptoms
100	0.01	No symptoms
200	0.02	Mild Headache
400	0.04	Headache after 1 – 2 Hours
800	0.08	Headache after 45 minutes; nausea, collapse, unconscious after 2 hours
1,000	0.10	Dangerous – Unconsciousness after 1 hour
1,600	0.16	Headache dizziness and nausea after 20 minutes
3,200	0.32	Headache dizziness and nausea after 5 - 10 minutes, Unconsciousness after 30 minutes
6,400	0.64	Headache dizziness and nausea after 1 - 2 minutes, Unconsciousness after 10 - 15 minutes
12,800	1.26	Immediate unconsciousness, danger of death in 1 - 3 minutes

It is very important that carbon monoxide detectors are installed on every level of your home, especially outside sleeping areas. Install the carbon monoxide detector according to the manufacturer's instructions. In addition, have a reputable service technician inspect and clean all fuel-burning appliances, furnace, vent pipe and chimney flues once a year. Birds' nests, twigs and old mortar in chimneys can block proper ventilation and lead to build-up of carbon monoxide gas in the home.

For more information, please do not hesitate to call our office at 905-738-4999, and one of our associates will be happy to assist you with whatever your needs may be.

Stay Safe,

Julie Ineson