

## ***Protecting Your Family from Carbon Monoxide Poisoning***

Every year, hundreds die by accident from breathing in carbon monoxide.<sup>1</sup> Here are ways to protect you and your family from carbon monoxide poisoning.

### ***What is carbon monoxide poisoning?***<sup>2</sup>

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas. High levels of it can kill a person in minutes. Carbon monoxide is produced when fuel such as oil, gas, wood, kerosene or charcoal is burned. Unsafe levels can result when fuel-burning stoves, heaters or other devices are misused or are not working right.

### ***Why is it dangerous?***<sup>3</sup>

You can't see or smell it. Each year, hundreds die by accident from this poisonous gas. Thousands more go to the emergency room. The accidents are caused by fuel-burning devices or running cars.

You can prevent accidents by knowing about carbon monoxide poisoning.

### ***Know the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning.***<sup>4</sup>

The signs are often similar to the flu.

Signs include:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Fatigue

If you have these signs and you have been around a fuel-burning stove, engine or heater (or you think you have been exposed to carbon monoxide in some other way), you could have carbon monoxide poisoning.

### ***What should you do if you think you have carbon monoxide poisoning?***<sup>5</sup>

- Get fresh air right away. Open windows and doors. Turn off all devices burning fuel. Leave the house or building quickly.
- Seek medical attention right away. Go to the emergency room or call 911. Explain why you think you may have carbon monoxide poisoning. A blood test can show if you have it.
- Have fuel-burning appliances repaired before using them again.



## Take steps to stay safe.<sup>6</sup>

- Never burn charcoal inside a home, garage, car or tent.
- Never use a gas oven or range to heat your home, even for a short time.
- Never leave a car, truck or van running in a garage, even if the garage door is open.
- Keep battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors in your house. Check the batteries twice a year.
- Each year, you or your landlord should check your furnace and water heater, as well as any device that burns gas, coal or oil. Check the filter monthly when you use the furnace. Clean or replace the filter when needed.
- Never sleep in a room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater.

## We are here to help you.

To learn more about carbon monoxide poisoning, call your doctor or nurse. You also can call MedCall<sup>®</sup>, the 24-hour nurse help line.

For other sources, call the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or the Consumer Product Safety Commission. You also may go online to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).



### BlueChoice HealthPlan Medicaid

Customer Care Center: **1-866-781-5094**

TTY line: **1-866-773-9634**

MedCall: **1-866-577-9710**

TTY line: **1-800-368-4424**

[www.bluechoicescmedicaid.com](http://www.bluechoicescmedicaid.com)

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): **1-800-438-4318**

Consumer Product Safety Commission: **1-800-638-2772**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): **1-800-232-4636**

TTY lines are only for members with hearing and speech loss.



Medicaid

Sources: <sup>1,2,3</sup>U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, *Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention* (Accessed August 2009): <http://www.epa.gov/aging/resources/factsheets/pcmp/index.htm>

<sup>4,5,6</sup>U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, *Neighborhood Safety Network, Carbon Monoxide—The Invisible Killer* (Accessed August 2009): <http://www.cpsc.gov/nsn/co.html>

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