

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of the side of an ambulance. The ambulance is white with orange and blue accents. A blue Star of Life symbol is visible on the side. The number '502' is printed on the side panel. The emergency lights on top are illuminated with a red and yellow glow. The background is dark and out of focus.

# Silent Killer

**What You Should  
Know About  
Carbon Monoxide**

## 3 Things You Should Know About Carbon Monoxide

- 1. It can kill you.** Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that can be deadly. It is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in the U.S. Young children, pregnant women, senior citizens and people with heart or respiratory problems are especially vulnerable to CO poisoning.
- 2. It's invisible.** You cannot see it, touch it or smell it. Carbon monoxide has no odor or color and cannot be detected without the use of a carbon monoxide detector.
- 3. You could be at risk.** Carbon monoxide gas is created from the burning of natural gas, oil, charcoal, gasoline, wood and other materials. Any fuel-burning appliance that is not vented will produce carbon monoxide. This includes stoves, furnaces, ovens, fireplaces, generators, gas-powered equipment, car exhaust and gas water heaters.



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## How does CO affect my body?

When we breathe, our red blood cells pick up oxygen. However, they pick up CO faster than oxygen, so if there is CO in the air, more of it will enter your body than oxygen. This lack of oxygen can damage tissues and result in death.

Symptoms, which may clear up when you leave the area, range from mild to severe and include the following:

### Low level poisoning

- Tiredness in healthy people
- Chest pain in people with heart disease

### Medium level poisoning

- Flu-like symptoms including nausea, dizziness, headache and confusion
- Impaired vision and coordination
- Breathing difficulty and increased blood pressure
- Skin with a reddish cast

### High level poisoning

- Convulsions or seizures
- Loss of consciousness
- Death

## Protect yourself

To protect you and your family, follow these safety precautions:

- Install a UL listed carbon monoxide monitor on every floor and outside of sleeping areas about 5 feet off the floor. Look for a monitor marked with the phrase “single station carbon monoxide alarm.”
- Test CO monitors weekly, and replace batteries yearly. Follow manufacturer's care instructions.



- Never use your stove to heat your home, and keep your range clean.
- Have fuel-burning appliances inspected yearly. Consider buying vented appliances.
- Do not idle your car in a closed garage.

### If Your CO monitor sounds:

- **Get out of the house immediately and call 911 or the fire department.**
- **Do not re-enter the house until it has been aired out and CO levels are normal.**
- **Call a qualified technician to inspect fuel-burning appliances.**

