

Carbon Monoxide:

Family Safety Checklist

Educational only, not medical advice.



Carbon monoxide (CO) is an **odorless, colorless gas**. Each year, **more than 400 Americans die** from unintentional CO poisoning not linked to fires, **more than 100,000 visit an emergency department**, and **more than 14,000 are hospitalized**.¹

FRESH AIR FIRST, THEN CALL

Know the signs

- ☐ **Headache, dizziness, weakness.** Also nausea or upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.¹
- ☐ **Feels like the flu, but no fever.** CDC says CO symptoms are often described as flu like. EPA lists flu like symptoms without fever.^{1,2}
- ☐ **More than one person sick at once.** Suspect CO if several people get sick at the same time, if symptoms start after a fuel burning device turns on, or if people feel better away from home.³
- ☐ **Pets sick too?** CO can build up indoors and poison people and animals who breathe it.¹
- ☐ **Sleeping people are at risk.** People who are sleeping can die from CO before they have symptoms.¹

Lower your risk at home

- ☐ **CO alarm on every level**, including the basement, and near every sleeping area.^{2,1}
- ☐ **Test alarms once a month.** Check batteries each spring and fall when you change your clocks.^{2,1}
- ☐ **Replace alarms on schedule.** Follow the manufacturer's instructions, or every 5 years.¹
- ☐ **Yearly inspection.** Have your heating system, water heater, and other gas, oil, or coal appliances serviced every year. Have your chimney checked or cleaned every year.¹
- ☐ **Never indoors:** generators, charcoal grills, camp stoves, or unvented gas heaters. Never run a generator in your home or garage, even with doors and windows open.^{1,2}
- ☐ **Generator outside, 20+ feet away** from windows, doors, and vents.¹
- ☐ **Never warm up a car in an attached garage**, even with the garage door open.¹

If anyone has symptoms or the CO alarm sounds:

1. **Fresh air first.** Get everyone outside right away.^{3,4}
2. **Call 911** from outside. Don't search for the source yourself.⁴
3. **Stay out** until emergency responders say it's safe.⁴
4. **Get checked.** Tell the doctor you suspect CO.²

Sources

1. CDC, Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Basics (Jan 12, 2026): <https://www.cdc.gov/carbon-monoxide/about/index.html>
 2. US EPA, Carbon Monoxide Poisoning: Protect Your Family and Yourself Factsheet: <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/carbon-monoxide-poisoning-protect-your-family-and-yourself-factsheet>
 3. New York State Dept. of Health, Take Steps to Prevent CO Poisoning: https://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/emergency/weather/carbon_monoxide/
 4. North Carolina Division of Public Health (Nov 21, 2025): <https://www.dph.ncdhhs.gov/blog/2025/11/21/november-carbon-monoxide-awareness-month-protect-yourself-and-your-loved-ones>
- All accessed Oct 17, 2026. Dr. Jocko, ER physician and author of *Quit & Get Rich*.