
CDC Report Finds Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Highest During Cold Weather

ATLANTA -- Carbon monoxide (CO) exposures and poisonings occur more often during the fall and winter, when people are more likely to use gas furnaces and heaters, says a recently released report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The report, *Unintentional Non-Fire-Related Carbon Monoxide Exposures — United States, 2001–2003*, finds that approximately 480 U.S. residents died each year from non-fire-related CO poisoning. In addition, from 2001-2003, an estimated 15,200 persons with confirmed or possible non-fire-related CO exposure or poisoning were treated annually in U.S. hospital emergency departments.

“This study further illustrates that carbon monoxide poisoning is preventable,” said Allison Stock, a toxicologist and one of the authors of the report. “One of the primary ways to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning is through yearly maintenance of gas-burning home appliances. We recommend having a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector in the home to alert residents of dangerous levels of carbon monoxide. But carbon monoxide detectors are not the primary way to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.”

Residents are urged to immediately leave their home and call 911 if the carbon monoxide detector in their home sounds. Other critical ways to prevent CO exposure and poisoning are to avoid the indoor use of unvented gas-burning appliances, unvented gas or wood-burning stoves and unvented fireplaces. The study appears in the Jan. 21 Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, which can be found at www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5402a2.htm.

For more information about carbon monoxide poisoning and prevention visit <http://www.cdc.gov/co/>