NOVEMBER 2026

THE POISON PREVENTION SCRIPT

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

We are finally heading into the cooler months of the year here in Arizona and with that comes an increased risk for carbon monoxide poisoning. Each year, our center sees an increase in number of calls related to carbon monoxide (CO). This happens because during the winter time people are more likely to be using things like fuel-burning heaters, furnaces, and fireplaces. Additionally, if winter storms cause power outages folks may rely on portable generators, gas grills, and even their car for keeping warm and charging devices. This month's newsletter focuses on carbon monoxide poisoning and prevention. Continue reading to learn more about carbon monoxide safety.



In this issue:

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

National Rural Health Day

In the Community: TMC Holiday Safety Fest

Staff Spotlight: Lorri Reilly, PharmD, CSPI

ARIZONA
Poison and Drug
Information Center
1-800-222-1222

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning and Prevention

Last year our center managed, 29 cases related to carbon monoxide during the months of November and December. Although carbon monoxide is a year-round hazard, colder weather brings an increased risk for poisoning.

What is carbon monoxide?
Carbon monoxide forms when carbon-based fuels like natural gas, propane, gasoline, kerosene, and wood or charcoal, undergo incomplete combustion.

Why is it dangerous?
It is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas that is poisonous to humans and animals. When inhaled, CO binds to hemoglobin (the protein in red blood cells that carry oxygen) depriving organs of oxygen. Because we cannot detect it with our senses, detectors are important in preventing poisoning.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning:
Exposure to low or moderate levels of CO can lead to flu-like symptoms which get better when stepping out to fresh air:

- Headache, dizziness or lightheadedness, weakness or drowsiness, nausea and vomiting, shortness of breath or chest pain, confusion or blurred vision.

Prolonged exposure or exposure to high levels can lead to loss of consciousness, permanent brain damage, or death.

If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning:

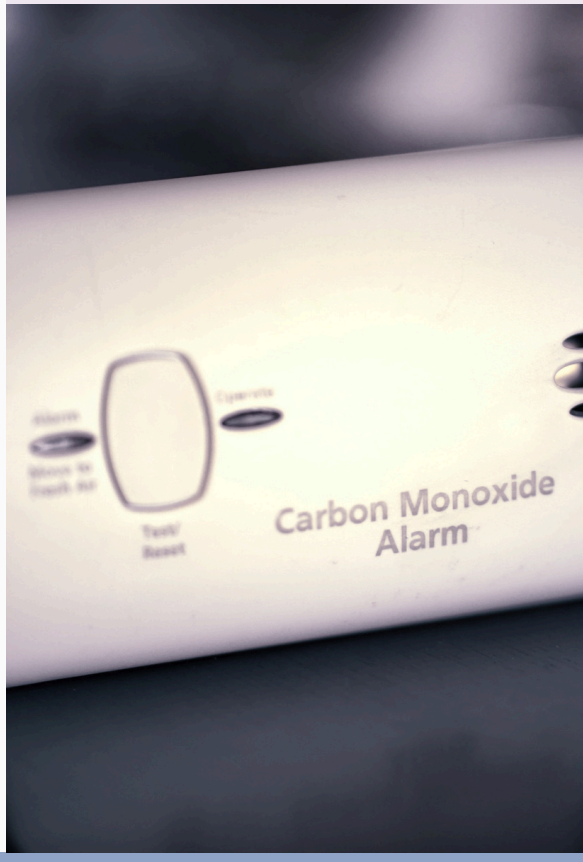
- Get everyone, including pets, out to fresh air.
- Call Poison Control for guidance or call 911 if anyone is experiencing life-threatening symptoms.
- Do not re-enter the area until it has been determined safe to do so.

How to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Use generators outdoors, 20 feet away from windows and doors.
- Do NOT use grills or camping stoves indoors.
- Make sure fuel appliances are working correctly.
- Install CO detectors on each level of the home and near sleeping areas.
- Do NOT sit in an idling car, even in an open garage.
- Make sure your car's exhaust pipe is free from snow and debris.

For more information:

Scan the QR code or visit our website, azpoison.com for more information.



National Rural Health Day

National Rural Health Day was founded in 2011 to honor individuals and communities working every day to support and strengthen rural health across America.

Poison control centers serve as a vital healthcare resource for rural communities across the nation. Last year, 81.7% of poisoning cases* originating outside of a healthcare facility were safely managed on site, most often at the caller's place of residence. Callers have stated that without poison control centers as a resource, they would have sought care at a hospital following a poisoning incident. This highlights the important role poison control centers play in preventing unnecessary hospital visits and reducing the burden of travel for individuals in rural communities, where reaching the nearest hospital can mean driving for hours. The Poison Helpline is an accessible way to ensure those living in areas with limited access to healthcare are able to get immediate guidance from our specialsits.

*refers to cases managed by the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center.



In the Community: TMC Holiday Safety Fest

Unfortunately, TMC's Spooktacular Safety Fair had to be cancelled due to severe winds. They will instead be hosting Holiday Safety Fest on December 19th from 10am-1pm.

The event will be hosted at TMC Rincon (10350E. Drexel Rd. Tucson, AZ). The event is free and open to the public. Be sure to attend to get all the health and safety information!



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Staff Spotlight: Lorri Reilly, PharmD, CSPI



Lorri Reilly, PharmD, CSPI is a Certified Specialist in Poison Information (CSPI) at the Arizona Poison and Drug Information Center. Lorri received her Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Arizona College of Pharmacy. During her fourth year of pharmacy school she was hired as a graduate intern at the poison center and has since been with the center. She has enjoyed teh variety of training provided including hazardous materials and infectious diseases, in additiona to the many toxicology conferences she has attended. As one of the many voices of the poison center and COVID hotline, she has assisted countless members of the community with a calm and kind demeanor. Lorri is grateful for the camaraderie and friendships she has developed at the center and proud of the professionalism and service provided by the center.