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power to control what you spend

# Energy Efficiency Advisor

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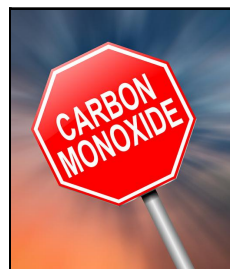
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## Feeling Under the Weather?

Feeling a bit under the weather lately? It may not be the flu. Instances of flu do seem to rise during the colder months, however, if you continue to experience flu-like symptoms over an extended period of time or if you only feel ill when at home, it might not be the flu at all. It could be that you have carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a tasteless, odorless and colorless gas that you cannot see or smell, but when breathed in at high concentrations, it can cause death. Even at low levels, it can make you sick. CO is produced by the burning of fuel and can come from such appliances as gas or oil furnaces and space heaters, gas dryers, gas water heaters, gas stoves, generators, wood stoves and fireplaces.

Because CO poisoning symptoms mimic flu symptoms, many people do not realize they have been exposed to high levels of the gas. Unfortunately, this gas can cause seizures, comas, brain damage or death, so it is essential that you and your family treat combustion appliances with care.



How can you prevent CO exposure and poisoning? The following action steps can keep you and your family safe from this deadly gas.

1. Never use charcoal grills or run engines inside your home, garage, or basement, even if it's for a short amount of time. Charcoal grills and small gasoline engines emit a lot of CO. Even opening all the windows and doors won't provide enough fresh air to prevent CO poisoning.

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2. Never warm up a vehicle inside the garage. Warming up your car, truck or motorcycle on a cold day for just a few minutes (even with the garage door open) can create enough CO to make you sick. Additionally, start lawnmowers and other lawn equipment outdoors.
3. Have a heating contractor check your furnace, chimney and other sources of CO every fall to make sure everything is okay. Make sure they use a tool that measures CO. To get harmful gases out of the home, many heating appliances have chimneys or vents. The chimney carries CO and other gases from the appliance to the outdoors. If your appliances and vents are working right, there should be little CO around them. If you rent your property, ask your landlord to have your heating system checked.
4. Make sure chimneys are in good shape – clean and working right. Have your chimney, wood-burning fireplace, or wood stove swept every year. Burning wood always creates a lot of CO. It is very important that all the smoke goes out through the chimney.
5. If you use unvented kerosene or gas heaters or a vent-free fireplace, follow instructions carefully and open a window for fresh air. Do not use them while sleeping.
6. Put CO alarms near each sleeping area and on each floor of your home.
7. Never use the kitchen stove or oven to heat your home.
8. Have the kitchen stove fixed before using it if the flames burn orange or yellow.
9. Don't use a smoking fireplace until you fix the problem.

CO alarms will help protect you and your family from sickness or death. A good alarm will make a loud noise when CO levels become too high. There are plug-in and battery-operated alarms. Look on the package to make sure the alarm is approved by a qualified testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratory (UL). Check the batteries on a battery-operated alarm every six months.

Every home should have at least one CO alarm. It's best to put one near each sleeping area on each floor of the home. However, remember that alarms do not take the place of checking and taking good care of your home's furnace, fireplace or space heaters.

If someone in your family shows signs of CO poisoning or if an alarm goes off:

1. Get outside right away.
2. Call 911 or your local emergency number from a phone outside your home.
3. See a doctor or nurse right away, even if you feel better after breathing fresh air. They can check your blood and breath for CO levels and tell you if you need more medical care.
4. Treat all alarm soundings as an emergency. Never ignore an alarm sounding!
5. Have your home checked out by a qualified heating



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- contractor. You can find one online or in the telephone book.
6. Don't go back home until all problems have been fixed.

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## Cooking this Thanksgiving?

If you plan on cooking up a storm this Thanksgiving, ENERGY STAR suggests the following for saving energy in the kitchen:

- *Using the right-sized pot on stove burners can save about \$36 annually for an electric range, or \$18 for gas. Covering pots and pans also helps you cook more efficiently and keeps your kitchen from getting too warm.*
- *Have a gas range? Keep the burners clean to ensure maximum efficiency. Blue flames mean good combustion while yellow flames mean service may be needed to ensure the gas is burning efficiently.*
- *Use your microwave or toaster oven to reheat or cook small portions.*
- *You can reduce cooking energy by as much as 80 percent when using your microwave for small portions. This also helps save on air conditioning costs during the summer since less heat is generated compared to using your stove or oven.*



Source:

[https://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=products.es\\_at\\_home\\_tips](https://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=products.es_at_home_tips)

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## Food Safety for the Holidays

While this newsletter traditionally focuses on home energy management only, the North Carolina Cooperative Extension (NCCE) has a wealth of other information that can offer practical solutions to your everyday life.

During this season of celebrations, food preparation and safety are of great concern.

To help you with preparing a delicious and safe meal, explore this [Holiday Food Safety Info Sheet](#) called "Avoiding Foodborne Illness".



Also, when making that traditional turkey meal, don't forget about USDA's [Let's Talk Turkey](#) page.

Also, to keep your family safe, check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer. The refrigerator should be set at 41°F or below. The freezer at 0°F. Use a freestanding appliance thermometer to track temperatures in the refrigerator and freezer and make adjustments accordingly.

For more information on food safety and preservation, visit NCCE's [Food Safety](#) site.

Home Energy Management: [energy.ces.ncsu.edu](http://energy.ces.ncsu.edu)

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