



# Wellness At Work

A MED-1 Occupational Health System publication promoting health and wellness in the workplace.

## Wellness Services

### Screenings

Biometric  
Cholesterol  
Diabetes  
Colo-rectal cancer  
PSA

### Specialized Programs

Health risk appraisals  
Immunizations  
Smoking cessation  
Customized worksite programs  
Drug free worksite  
Special exams

### Education

CPR/First Aid training  
AED programs  
Wellness coaching  
Health fairs  
Wellness education

### Incentive Programs

**Wellness at Work** is a informational publication provided by MED-1 Occupational Health System to facilitate health and wellness initiatives for employees.

For more information on any topics presented, a Spanish version, or to access additional copies of current or past issues, contact Tammie Milligan at 616.459.1570 or go to — [www.med1services.com](http://www.med1services.com).

## Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, toxic gas which interferes with the oxygen-carrying capacity of blood. CO is non-irritating and can overcome persons without warning. Severe carbon monoxide poisoning causes neurological damage, illness, coma and death.

### Diagnosing the symptoms

At moderate levels, employees get severe headaches, become dizzy, mentally confused, nauseated, or faint. Low levels can cause shortness of breath, mild nausea, and mild headaches, and may have longer term effects on health. Since many of these symptoms are similar to those of the flu, food poisoning, or other illnesses, CO poisoning can be challenging to diagnose.

When assessing employee complaints, asking the right questions can determine if CO is the culprit or just a nasty case of the flu.

- ✓ Do symptoms occur only in certain places at work or at home?
- ✓ Does anyone else in their family or workgroup experience similar symptoms?
- ✓ Is any fuel-burning equipment in use? Has it been inspected recently?

### How to help prevent CO poisoning

To reduce the chances of CO poisoning in your workplace, you should take the following actions:

- ✓ Install an effective ventilation system to remove potential CO from work areas.
- ✓ Maintain equipment to promote safe operation and reduce CO formation.

- ✓ Consider switching from gasoline-powered to electricity, battery, or compressed air powered equipment.
- ✓ Prohibit the use of fuel-powered engines or tools in poorly ventilated areas.
- ✓ Provide personal CO monitors with audible alarms.
- ✓ Test air regularly in areas where CO may be present.
- ✓ Use certified self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) or respirators in areas where CO levels could be present.
- ✓ Educate workers about the sources, symptoms, and conditions that could result in CO poisoning.

### More Information...

OSHA has various publications, standard, technical assistance, and compliance tools to help you.

To order publications online, visit [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov) and go to **Publications**.

Or call **800-321-OSHA**.

Or, visit these web sites:

**Environmental Protection Agency**  
[www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/coftsht.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/coftsht.html)  
**Occupational Safety and Health Administration**

[www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data\\_General\\_Facts/carbonmonoxide-factsheet.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_General_Facts/carbonmonoxide-factsheet.pdf)

You can also rely on MED-1 to provide more information on preventing injuries and illness like CO poisoning in your work environments because we see your employees every day and know how important health and safety is to you.

# Wellness At Work

A MED-1 Occupational Health System publication promoting health and wellness in the workplace.

## Protect Yourself from the Silent Killer

### What to do

- ⇒ Get to fresh air.
- ⇒ Administer 100 oxygen or begin CPR.
- ⇒ Seek medical help immediately
- ⇒ Install a battery operated CO detector and test it regularly.
- ⇒ Inspect fuel-burning equipment regularly.
- ⇒ Vent equipment properly and follow all use instructions.
- ⇒ Don't ignore symptoms.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in America and is often referred to as the "Silent Killer" because it cannot be seen, smelled, or tasted.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates CO poisoning claim nearly 500 lives and causes more than 15,000 visits to hospital emergency departments.

### Sources of Exposure

- ✓ Portable generators/generators in buildings.
- ✓ Concrete cutting saws, compressors.
- ✓ Power trowels, floor buffers, space heaters.
- ✓ Welding, gasoline powered pumps.

### Know the Symptoms

- ✓ Headaches, dizziness and drowsiness.
- ✓ Nausea, vomiting, tightness across the chest.
- ✓ Fatigue, seizures, loss of consciousness.

At moderate levels, you or your family can get severe headaches, become dizzy, mentally confused, nauseated, or faint. You can even die if these levels persist for a long time.

Low levels can cause shortness of breath, mild nausea, and mild headaches, and may have longer term effects on your health.

Since many of these symptoms are similar to those of the flu, food poisoning, or other illnesses, you may not think that CO poisoning could be the cause.

### Be Aware

- ✓ Report any situation to your employer.
- ✓ Be alert to ventilation problems, especially in enclosed areas where gases of burning fuels may be released.
- ✓ Report promptly any complaints of dizziness, drowsiness, or nausea.
- ✓ Avoid overexertion if you suspect CO poisoning and leave the contaminated area.
- ✓ Tell your doctor you may have been exposed to CO if you get sick.
- ✓ Avoid use of fuel-powered equipments (e.g., power washers, heaters, forklifts, etc.) while working in enclosed spaces.

### More Information...

For more information on Carbon Monoxide Poisoning, visit these web sites:

#### Consumer Product Safety Commission

1-800-638-2772 or [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

#### Centers for Disease Control

[www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/cofacts.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/cofacts.asp)

[www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/carbonmonoxide.asp](http://www.bt.cdc.gov/disasters/carbonmonoxide.asp)

**Wellness at Work** is an informational publication provided by MED-1 Occupational Health System to facilitate health and wellness initiatives for employees.

For more information on any topics presented, a Spanish version, or to access additional copies of current or past issues, contact Tammie Milligan at 616.459-1570 or go to — [www.med1services.com](http://www.med1services.com).

