



BETTERSAFE

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR FAMILY'S SAFETY

What Everyone Ought to Know About Protecting Against

CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

As the weather starts getting colder and fall approaches, furnaces across America are turned on heating homes and businesses. It's important to be aware that unintentional carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning can occur almost anywhere – in homes, businesses, RVs, cabins, boats, and cars. In fact, each year, more than 400 Americans die from unintentional CO poisoning not linked to fires, more than 20,000 visit the emergency room, and more than 4,000 are hospitalized, according to the CDC.

WHAT IS CO POISONING?

CO is an odorless, colorless, and tasteless gas that often goes undetected, striking victims caught off guard or in their sleep. It's found in fumes produced any time you burn fuel in cars or trucks, small engines, stoves, lanterns, grills, fireplaces, gas ranges, or furnaces. It can build up indoors and poison people and animals who breathe it.

Afraid? Not If You Follow These Tips To Protect You and Your Family From CO Poisoning Include:

1. Install CO detectors. Put one near each sleeping area in your house. Check the batteries every time you check your smoke detector batteries — at least



twice a year. CO detectors are also available for motor homes and boats.

- 2. Open the garage door before starting your car.** Never leave your car running in your garage. Be particularly cautious if you have an attached garage. Leaving your car running in a space attached to the rest of your house is never safe, even with the garage door open.
- 3. Use gas appliances as recommended.** Never use a gas stove or oven to heat your home. Use portable gas camp stoves outdoors only. Use fuel-burning space heaters only when someone is awake to monitor them and doors or windows are open to provide fresh air. Don't run a generator in an enclosed space, such as the basement or garage.
- 4. Have your heating system checked every year.** That includes the water heater, and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.

5. **Make sure your gas appliances are vented properly.** Horizontal vent pipes for appliances, such as a water heater, should go up slightly as they go toward outdoors.
6. **Have your chimney checked or cleaned every year. Chimneys can be blocked by debris.** This can cause CO to build up inside your home or cabin.
7. **Never use a gas range or oven for heating.** Using a gas range or oven for heating can cause a build-up of CO inside your home, cabin, or camper.
8. **Never use a generator inside your home.** That includes basement, or garage or less than 20 feet from any window, door, or vent.
9. **Keep your fuel-burning appliances and engines properly vented.** These include:
 - » Space heaters
 - » Furnaces
 - » Charcoal grills
 - » Cooking ranges
 - » Water heaters
 - » Fireplaces
 - » Portable generators
 - » Wood-burning stoves
 - » Car and truck engines

WHAT SYMPTOMS TO LOOK OUT FOR:

While the symptoms of CO poisoning they can include:

- » Headache
- » Nausea
- » Vomiting
- » Dizziness
- » Weakness
- » Chestpain
- » Altered mental status
- » Loss of Consciousness



The symptoms of CO poisoning may look like other medical conditions or problems, including the flu or food poisoning. Always see your healthcare provider for a diagnosis.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS?

If you breathe in large amounts of CO, your body will begin to replace the oxygen in your blood with CO. When this occurs, you can become unconscious. Death may occur in these cases. If you or your family members have any symptoms of CO poisoning, stay calm but act quickly. Leave the area and get fresh air right away and call 911. You should never treat CO poisoning yourself and don't ever drive yourself to the hospital in case you lose consciousness.



DAY IN DAY OUT

WELCOA'S ONLINE BULLETIN FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE

Succeed Over Fall Allergies

Don't spend all season sneezing.

Nothing says fall like hot tea or cocoa and, for nearly 50 million people in the United States, an itchy nose - making you feel annoyed and miserable. Fall allergy symptoms can negatively affect people of all ages annually, so the quality of life by causing fatigue and sleep disturbances and impairing concentration, depending on the frequency and severity of symptoms. Unfortunately, falling temperatures and leaves, means seasonal allergies.

Allergies happen when your immune system reacts to typically harmless substances as if they're dangerous intruders, according to the CDC. For many, the fall allergy season ranges from mid-August until the first frost.

Allergies can cause a range of symptoms that vary in severity. They include:

- » Coughing
- » Sneezing
- » Runny nose
- » Scratchy throat
- » Postnasal drip
- » Sinus pressure
- » Itchy, watery eyes

WHICH ALLERGENS ARE MOST COMMON IN THE FALL?

- » One of fall's main culprits is ragweed
- » Mold is another big one because it in fallen leaves during autumn
- » Dust mites which are invisible organisms called dust mites
- » Dander from animals like dogs, cats



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

Many allergic triggers start to appear in mid-to-late August. Getting in front of your symptoms means controlling them a lot better.

TIPS TO FIGHT FALL ALLERGIES AND WIN!

- » **Take action against mold.** Mold can grow anywhere there is water, and is a frequent foe in the fall. The key to reducing mold is moisture control. You can also help ward off mold by keeping home humidity below 60 percent and cleaning gutters regularly.
- » **Keep pollen out of your living space.** Ragweed, or any pollen that triggers your allergy symptoms, needs to be kept out of your house
- » **Wear a mask.** Wear mask when mowing the lawn or doing other outdoor chores. Wear gloves so you won't transfer pollen to your eyes or skin

- » **Make an appointment with an allergist.** Allergists are trained to identify your allergies and provide a personal treatment plan.
- » **Allergy medications.** On average, start taking your medications about two weeks before your symptoms normally start. Don't stop your medications until pollen counts have been down for about two weeks

The best defense requires a winning strategy. So be proactive by following these recommendations, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA):

- » Check the pollen and mold counts before you head outside
- » Wear protective accessories like a hat and sunglasses, too
- » Use a face mask when you rake (or play in) the leaves
- » Keep doors and windows closed when your allergens are plentiful, and use filtration systems
- » Use allergy-proof covers for your bedding, and wash your sheets at least once a week
- » Get a dehumidifier for your bedroom

HOW DO DOCTORS DIAGNOSE POLLEN ALLERGY?

As reported in the AAFA, Skin Prick Test (SPT) are most common.

A medical professional places a possible allergen on your skin then lightly prick or scratch the spot. If the spot develops redness, swelling and itching, the reaction to the allergen, there is an allergy present.

SPECIFIC IgE BLOOD TEST

Blood tests are helpful when people have a skin condition or are taking medicines that interfere with skin testing. Once taken, the blood sample is sent to a laboratory. The lab adds the allergen to your blood sample. As with skin testing, a positive blood test to an allergen does not necessarily mean that an allergen caused your symptoms.



PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO POTENTIALLY FATAL ALLERGIC REACTIONS. MORE SERIOUS SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- » Swelling of the lips, mouth or throat
- » Breathing trouble
- » Asthma attacks



TAKECHARGE

WELCOA'S SELF-CARE BULLETIN

Mental Illness Awareness Week

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

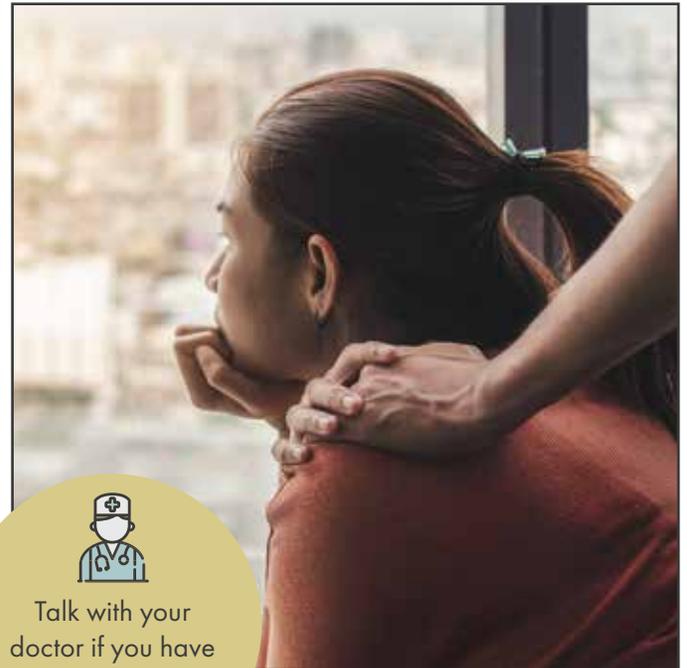
"You don't have to see the whole staircase, just take the first step."

- MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.

Each year, millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental health condition, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). However, mental illness affects everyone directly or indirectly through family, friends or coworkers. The burden of mental illness in the United States is among the highest of all diseases, and mental disorders are among the most common causes of disability. Fifty percent of mental illness begins by age 14, and three-quarters begins by age 24.

It's not easy to always tell what might be the signs of a mental illness. There's no easy test letting someone know if actions and thoughts might lead to a mental illness diagnosis. It's important to follow up with a mental health professional if a few or many signs of mental illness in adults and adolescents include the following:

- » Dramatic sleep and appetite changes or decline in personal care
- » Rapid or dramatic shifts in emotions or depressed feelings
- » Recent social withdrawal and loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed
- » An unusual drop in functioning, at school, work or



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

social activities, such as quitting sports, failing in school or difficulty performing familiar tasks

- » Problems with concentration, memory or logical thought and speech that are hard to explain
- » A vague feeling of being disconnected from oneself or one's surroundings; a sense of unreality
- » Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger towards family, friends, and/or colleagues
- » Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality
- » Thinking about suicide
- » Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- » Excessive worrying or fear
- » Feeling excessively sad or low

- » Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- » Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable “highs” or feelings of euphoria

Mental health conditions can also begin to develop in young children. Because they’re still learning how to identify and talk about thoughts and emotions, their most obvious symptoms are behavioral. According to NAMI, symptoms in children may include the following:

- » Changes in school performance
- » Excessive worry or anxiety, for instance fighting to avoid bed or school
- » Hyperactive behavior
- » Frequent nightmares
- » Frequent disobedience or aggression
- » Frequent temper tantrums

One or two of these symptoms alone can’t predict a mental illness but may indicate a need for further evaluation. People with suicidal thoughts or intent, or thoughts of harming others, need immediate attention.

IS IT TIME TO GET HELP?

Don’t be afraid to reach out if you or someone you know needs help. Learning all you can about mental health is an important first step. A red flag to early warning symptoms can be frightening and its recommended to seek the following actions:

- » Have an evaluation by a mental health or other health care professional
- » Learn about mental illness, including signs and symptoms
- » Receive supportive counseling about daily life and strategies for stress management
- » Be monitored closely for conditions requiring more intensive care



Reach out to your health insurance, primary care doctor or state/country mental health authority for more resources. Getting a diagnosis is just the first step; treatments for mental illness vary by diagnosis and by person. There’s no “one size fits all” treatment. Treatment options can include medication, counseling, social support and education.

Remember - you’re not alone!

DID YOU KNOW?

- » 18.57% of adults are experiencing a mental health illness, equivalent to 45 million Americans.
- » 4.38% are experiencing a severe mental health illness.



TO YOUR HEALTH

WELCOA'S ONLINE GENERAL WELLNESS BULLETIN

The Common Cold: AND HOW TO DEAL WITH IT

The common cold affects children 5 to 10 times per year and adults 2 to 3 times. Seems like someone in the family is always recovering from something, doesn't it? It is the main reason kids miss school and adults miss work. And if you're running a low-grade fever, which is expected with the cold, you do need to stay home until you're fever-free for at least 24 hours without the help of medication.

Most people catch a cold in the winter and spring but you can get it anytime. The common cold usually resolves on its own in 7 to 10 days and, unfortunately, there's nothing we can do to speed it along. We don't use antibiotics here, even if nasal discharge is yellow or green - this is okay and expected. There's a myth that green or yellow drainage means we've got a bacterial infection and need antibiotics. This CAN be true but not always. One trick: does it START green or yellow right outta the gate? This could be a sign of a bacterial infection. But if it starts clear and changes to thick and colorful, it's likely a virus that your body is fighting off.

Expected signs and symptoms:

- » Fever
- » Sneezing
- » Sore throat
- » Fatigue
- » Runny or stuffy nose
- » Headaches
- » Coughing
- » Body aches



WHAT CAN WE DO TO FEEL BETTER?

- » Tylenol or Ibuprofen for discomfort or fever. (No Ibuprofen for your little ones under 6 months old. No Aspirin for anyone under 18 years old.)
- » Cool-mist humidifier to moisten the air. This will help stuffy noses and sore throats.
- » Drink extra fluids. Soups, popsicles, tea - anything that sounds good.
- » Cough drops or hard candy to help the cough.
- » A spoonful of honey can also help with coughing and a sore throat. (No honey for your babes under 1 year old.)
- » Cough and cold medicines effectiveness is not fully proven even in adults and not recommended at all in children. It's always tempting to grab whatever promises to assist you in your illness, but try to be patient and just let it cycle out of your system on its own.

- » Get extra rest. Your body heals while you sleep!
- » Avoid smoke and other irritants.
- » Use nasal drops or sprays to help with stuffy noses.
- » Gargle with salt water to soothe a sore throat.

There are some popular alternative remedies for colds, but the research is mixed and they have not been proven to actually help. Some examples of these are Vitamin C, Zinc, and Echinacea. If you are healthy and not on prescriptions medications that contraindicate the usage of them, you can go ahead and give them a shot! (It should be noted that taking a zinc supplement may cause nausea, so be aware of that and discuss options with your doctor if needed.)

The most important thing we can do to prevent catching or spreading colds, is to wash our hands! Remember last week's article? So important. Colds spread like wildfire because the virus lives on everything we touch! So wash hands, keep hands away from face, cough/sneeze into a tissue or sleeve, and clean all surfaces/phones/toys frequently.

When should we be concerned and give our doctor a call?

- » Fever lasts longer than 3 days
- » Fever, depending on age:
 - » 0-3 months: >100.4 F
 - » 3-24 months: >102 F
 - » 2 yrs+: >103 F
- » Sore throat is severe and you're questioning strep throat
- » Nasal discharge present >14 days or if you ever have severe sinus pain
- » Coughing more than 3 weeks
- » Wheezing or shortness of breath
- » Moderate to severe muscle aches
- » Symptoms seem to be worsening instead of improving



Talk with your doctor if you have any concerns about your health.

Usually the first few days are the most uncomfortable and then we slowly start to feel better and drain less.

DO YOU KNOW THE RIGHT WAY TO WASH YOUR HANDS AND HELP FIGHT COLDS

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) you can effectively wash your hands and help prevent the spread of germs and diseases by doing the following:

- » Wet your hands with clean, running water (it doesn't matter if the water is cold or warm). Apply soap and lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap.
- » Scrub for at least 20 seconds
- » Rinse your hands well under clean, running water
- » Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them

Hopefully you enjoy the 'downtime' while you have it and enjoy a movie or two! Soon - back to work!