



HEALTH INFORMATION

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

What is carbon monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly poisonous substance produced by the incomplete burning of gas and Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG).

This happens when a gas appliance has been incorrectly fitted, badly repaired or poorly maintained. It can also occur if flues, chimneys or vents are blocked.

Oil and solid fuels such as coal, wood, petrol and oil can also produce carbon monoxide.

What is carbon monoxide poisoning?

Carbon monoxide poisoning occurs when you breathe in even small amounts of the gas.

When you breathe in carbon monoxide, it gets into your blood stream and prevents your red blood cells from carrying oxygen. Without oxygen, your body tissue and cells die.

Levels that do not kill can cause serious harm to health when breathed in over a long period of time.

Long term effects of carbon monoxide poisoning include paralysis and brain damage. Such long term effects occur because many people are unaware of unsafe gas appliances and subsequent gas leaks.

What are the symptoms?

- headaches
- dizziness
- nausea
- breathlessness
- collapse
- loss of consciousness

What's the treatment?

Carbon monoxide poisoning can be confirmed by finding high levels in the blood.

Treatment includes making sure the patient is away from any source of the gas, providing basic life support as appropriate and giving oxygen before transferring the patient to hospital, if necessary.

People who suffer mild poisoning invariably make a full recovery