

DIAGNOSIS
CARBON MONOXIDE
POISONING

HEALTH ALERT

*Carbon Monoxide
Sickens NJ
Family of Four*

1-800-222-1222



**New
Jersey
Poison
Center**

STATE POISON CONTROL CENTER WARNS OF UNSAFE USE OF PORTABLE GAS GENERATORS

The New Jersey Poison Control Center in January assisted in the medical care of a family exposed to dangerous carbon monoxide (CO) from the exhaust fumes of a portable gas generator running in the basement.

The adults and their children experienced symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning and required treatment in the emergency room.



Fortunately, this family's exposure to carbon monoxide didn't end in tragedy," said Bruce Ruck, managing director of the [New Jersey Poison Control Center](#) at [Rutgers New Jersey Medical School](#).





Carbon monoxide is an odorless, poisonous gas that causes mild to severe illness to hundreds of people in New Jersey each year.

“Carbon monoxide poisoning is a hidden hazard that worries us at the poison control center year-round, especially during cold weather and storms that cause power outages, flooding and snow accumulation,” Ruck said.

“People and pets are often accidentally exposed to CO when gas-powered equipment, including portable generators, are used indoors or too close to homes and buildings.”

Breathing in carbon monoxide, often referred to as “the silent killer,” can quickly become life-threatening and must be treated as a medical emergency.

**THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF
CARBON MONOXIDE FOR ANYONE,
INCLUDING PETS.**

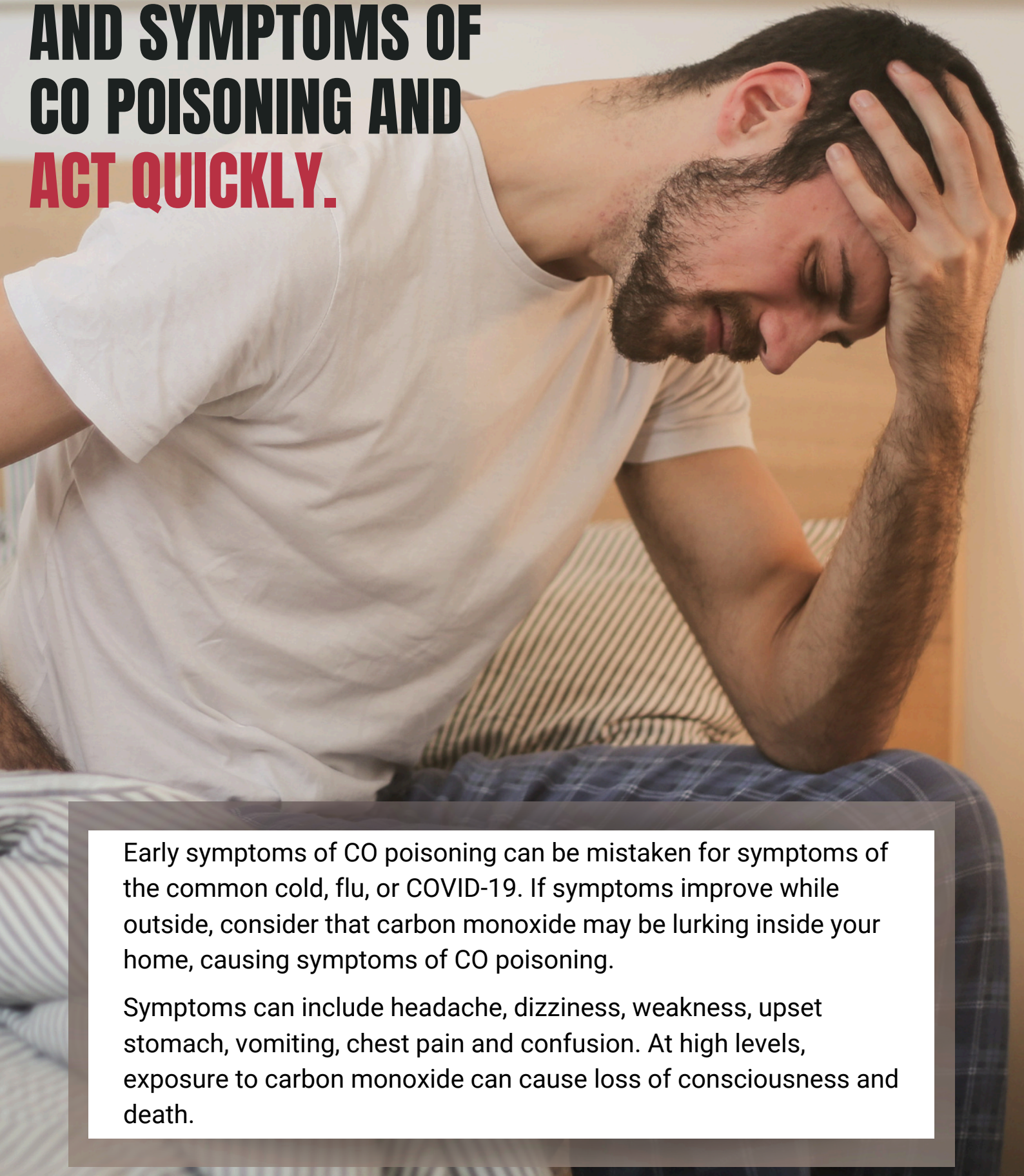
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IT IS CRUCIAL TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CO POISONING AND **ACT QUICKLY.**



Early symptoms of CO poisoning can be mistaken for symptoms of the common cold, flu, or COVID-19. If symptoms improve while outside, consider that carbon monoxide may be lurking inside your home, causing symptoms of CO poisoning.

Symptoms can include headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain and confusion. At high levels, exposure to carbon monoxide can cause loss of consciousness and death.



To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, keep running gas generators outdoors only.

Because gas-powered equipment produces carbon monoxide, they should never be used indoors, no matter the circumstance, experts said.

Generators should be placed outside more than 20 feet away with exhausts directed away from your home and your neighbors' homes. This will prevent dangerous levels of CO from building up inside and poisoning those exposed to it.

Gas generators are safe when used according to the manufacturer's instructions and kept at the recommended distance from homes and buildings. (Consumer Reports details crucial [safety tips](#) on operating a generator.)

"This gas gives no warning, meaning you can't see, smell, hear or taste it," Ruck said. The only way to know if CO is inside your home is to have working carbon monoxide detectors on every floor and outside sleeping areas. "If a carbon monoxide detector sounds its alarm, do not ignore it because it's trying to save your life."

Carbon monoxide detectors don't malfunction as often as people may think. Check CO detector units and batteries twice a year when changing the clocks for daylight saving time. "CO detectors save lives, so be sure to have them in your home or apartment," said Ruck.

If you suspect someone is experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, get medical help immediately:



1. If the person is unconscious or unresponsive, get them out of the house and call 911 immediately.



2. Leave the house or building and get to fresh air.

Don't waste time opening windows. This will delay your escape and cause you to breathe in even more dangerous fumes.



3. Contact your local fire department or energy provider to check for a carbon monoxide leak.



4. Call the New Jersey Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 for personalized medical guidance and care.





Get Free Medical Help 1-800-222-1222

Medical specialists are available to provide information, answer questions, and provide emergency support 24 hours a day

Anyone can call for medical help – children, teens, and adults

[NJPoisonCenter.org](https://www.njpoisoncenter.org)

NJ Poison Control Center

is a medical resource for both the public and healthcare providers.

If you have questions or concerns about carbon monoxide, contact the New Jersey Poison Control Center immediately for medical treatment advice.

Call the NJ Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222 or [Chat Here](#)

If someone is not breathing, hard to wake up, or having a seizure, call 9-1-1