Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

You have carbon monoxide poisoning. Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless and odorless gas that can render victims helpless and kill within minutes. It occurs when exhaust fumes from fuel burning sources are inhaled. The burning of any carbon-containing fuel (gasoline, coal, charcoal, wood) combined with a lack of proper ventilation can create deadly situations. When the gas is inhaled, it quickly enters the blood stream and reduces the amount of oxygen carried to the cells. Carbon monoxide sticks better than oxygen to the red blood cells. This results in progressively less oxygen received by the body. This may cause headaches, dizziness, sleepiness, *nausea* (feeling sick to your stomach), vomiting, or muscle weakness.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- If discharged from this location, do not return to your home or to the environment that exposed you to CO. It is possibly not safe, regardless of how well you feel you have solved the problem. You may also not think clearly for a short period of time after exposure, even if no permanent brain damage was done.
- Be certain that your caregiver has reported the problem to the appropriate authorities and that your family and others have left the building.
- Take the following precautions to prevent further exposures:
  - Have gas stoves and furnaces checked annually. Install CO detectors in your home.
  - Ventilate rooms where a coal or gas stove or furnace is used for heat.
  - Make sure gas and oil burning devices are properly vented.
  - Have your cars' exhaust systems checked annually.
  - Avoid sitting in a parked car with the motor running.
  - In cold weather, never go to sleep in your car with the motor running.
  - Avoid breathing exhaust fumes from cars. *Working on a running car in a garage, even with the garage door open, can cause CO poisoning and death.* Keep automobile tail pipes open.

IF YOU SUSPECT THAT A PERSON HAS INHALED THE POISONOUS FUMES, REMOVE THEM FROM THE SITE IMMEDIATELY. CALL FOR MEDICAL HELP. BEGIN RESCUE BREATHING AND CPR IF THEY ARE UNCONSCIOUS. KEEP THE AFFECTED PERSON WARM.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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