

[National Poison Prevention Week Offers Opportunity to Educate Families About Carbon Monoxide](#)

Local News

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National Poison Prevention Week, which runs from March 15-21, provides an opportunity for families to take steps to protect themselves from household poisons. Families, especially those with small children, are most often concerned about the toxins stored in medicine cabinets or locked away under the kitchen sink. But it's also important to remind parents of a life-threatening poison that may not come to mind--carbon monoxide (CO). Known as the "silent killer," carbon monoxide is the leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in America, and claimed the lives of nearly 1,200 Washingtonians from 1999-2005. As many as 1,000 state residents were poisoned by CO following the December 2006 windstorm.

You can't see, taste or smell carbon monoxide, and common sources include fuel-burning appliances, such as a furnace, water heater, stove, fireplace or grill, and fuel-burning engines such as a generator or vehicle. U.S. Census data show that at least 61% of Washington homeowners use gas, wood, kerosene, coal, or fuel as their major heat source, all of which emit carbon monoxide. A CO alarm is the only safe way to detect this lethal gas in your home. Coincidentally, on Wednesday, the State House Committee on Local Government & Housing will hear testimony on **Senate Bill 5561**, which would require carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in new and existing homes.

For more information about Poison Prevention Week and carbon monoxide, please visit www.knowaboutco.com. Below are some CO Do's and Don'ts of CO Prevention. PREVENTING CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING DO's of CO Prevention• Do install at least one battery-powered CO alarm or AC-powered unit with battery back-up on each level of your home and near sleeping areas. • Do have a licensed professional inspect heating systems and other fuel-burning appliances annually. • Do install fuel-burning appliances properly and operate according to the manufacturer's instructions. • Do keep chimneys clear of animal nests, leaves and residue to ensure proper ventilation. Have all fireplaces cleaned and inspected annually. • Do check all carbon monoxide alarms in your home. Do they need new batteries? Do replace CO alarms every seven years to benefit from the latest technology upgrades. DON'Ts of CO Prevention• Don't block or seal shut the exhaust flues or ducts used by water heaters, ranges and clothes dryers. • Don't leave your car running in an attached garage or carport. • Don't use ovens or stoves to heat your home. • Don't use charcoal or gas grills inside or operate outdoors near a window where CO fumes could seep in through a window. • Don't operate a generator in spaces attached to your home, such as porches, patios or garages. Only operate the generator outdoors in a well-ventilated, dry area, away from air intakes to the home and protected from direct exposure to rain.