

Carbon monoxide (CO)

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[Description](#)

[Symptoms](#)

[Protection and prevention](#)

[Identify sources of carbon monoxide](#)

[Protect yourself by taking precautions](#)

[People at risk](#)

[Help and resources](#)

[Multilingual notices and instructions – Black ice april 2023](#)

[Other useful links](#)

Description

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a toxic gas. It is odorless, colorless and tasteless. Its effects can occur long before you even become aware of its presence.

Carbon monoxide is a threat to your health even at low levels of exposure. When it enters your body, CO bonds with hemoglobin. This reduces the amount of oxygen in the bloodstream, inhibiting the blood's ability to carry oxygen in the body.

For more information: [Carbon Monoxide: A Silent Killer \(PDF\)](#)

Symptoms

What are the signs of carbon monoxide poisoning?

Mild poisoning:	More serious exposure:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- headaches- dizziness- nausea- vomiting- fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- fainting- convulsions- coma- death

Health protection and prevention

Did you know ?

- Two-thirds of all households have at least one source of carbon monoxide.
- Less than one-third of these households are equipped with a carbon monoxide detector

Identify sources of carbon monoxide

See the **CO sources section** (Québec.ca)

CO is also present in the workplace, where main sources of CO include:

- gasoline-powered handheld tools
- heavy machinery
- forklifts
- Coffee roasting facilities
- generators
- indoor parking garages

Protect yourself by taking precautions

Inside the house	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Have your combustion devices checked, as well as the ventilation system in the places where they are used- Install a CO detector<ul style="list-style-type: none">o It's the only way to detect the presence of the gas.- Have the condition of your chimney and furnace ductwork checked.- Do not use motorized appliances that use fuel, such as gasoline or propane, indoors.
Before taking the car after a snowstorm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- In winter, make sure to clear the snow from your car before starting it.- Do not leave your car engine running inside the garage, even with the door open.

People at risk

Carbon monoxide poisoning occurs faster in some people, including:

- Pregnant women and their fetuses;
- Newborns and children (because their breathing is shallower and faster);
- Elderly people (because their breathing is shallower and faster);
- People suffering from pulmonary, respiratory or cardiovascular problems;
- People with anemia;
- Smokers;
- People who engage in intense physical activity in carbon monoxide-contaminated and poorly ventilated environments;
- People living at high altitudes.

Source: [Ministère de la Santé et des Services sociaux](#)

Help and resources

If you suspect a case of carbon monoxide poisoning: act quickly!

- Get everyone out of the potentially contaminated area as soon as someone shows signs of poisoning
- Call [911](#) or contact the [Québec Poison Control Centre](#)
- Do not re-enter the location before getting expert advice. In Montréal, the fire department can measure carbon monoxide in the air and try to determine where it is coming from.

In the **workplace**, contact the occupational health team in your area.

- If you are pregnant and work in an environment where you are exposed to CO, consult the “Pour une maternité sans danger”.

Multilingual notices and instructions – Black ice april 2023

Available [here](#)

Other useful links

- [CAA-Quebec](#)
- [Energir](#) (The New Gaz Metropolitain)
- Health Canada – [Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning](#)