



## Increase in Carbon Monoxide Calls

The Nebraska Poison Center has seen a **24%** increase in calls on carbon monoxide so far this year over 2013. Every year more than 400 Americans die from unintentional CO poisoning and 20,000 are seen in emergency rooms, while another 4,000 are hospitalized.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ranked **Nebraska** as one of the states with the highest mortality rate from carbon monoxide. It is imperative that the citizens of Nebraska understand the dangers, the symptoms and how to prevent poisoning from carbon monoxide.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include sleepiness, headache, dizziness, blurred vision, nausea, shortness of breath and convulsions. The first step in treating carbon monoxide poisoning is getting the victim to fresh air. Then seek medical attention immediately.

Carbon monoxide is a gas produced when fuels burn incompletely. It has no color, taste or smell. The major causes of carbon monoxide poisoning include:

- Using heating equipment that is in poor repair
- Lack of ventilation in a car
- Using a charcoal grill indoors
- Using unvented space heaters

### **The Poison Center offers the following suggestions to help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:**

- Inspect all fuel-burning equipment yearly.
- Vent fuel-burning heaters to the outside.
- Do not use a gas range or an oven for heating a room.
- Never use a charcoal grill or hibachi inside.
- **Install carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home.**
- Never leave a car running in an attached garage, even with the garage door open.
- Have the vehicle muffler and tailpipes checked regularly.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning resemble those associated with other health conditions that are common among the elderly, especially in the winter. The carbon monoxide death rate is highest among people greater than 65 years of age.

The Nebraska Regional Poison Center offers tips on carbon monoxide poisoning prevention as a free community service. If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning or if you have any questions, contact the Nebraska Regional Poison Center toll-free at 1-800-222-1222.