

CARBON MONOXIDE: THE INVISIBLE MURDERER WHY?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a **colorless, odorless, tasteless and non-irritant gas**. Absorbed by lungs, **it replaces oxygen** in blood, with severe consequences for brain and heart.

In the district of Piacenza, in the last 4 years (2004-2007), 151 people have been intoxicated with carbon monoxide, and 5 of them dead.

HOW DOES IT FORM?

Carbon monoxide starts to form when wood, carbon, methane, petrol or gas oil, etc. **are burnt**.

The most serious **dangers** may come from:

- Water heaters with free fires, especially if they are placed in bathrooms.
- Gas heaters, especially if placed in small rooms, with low ventilation (usually kitchens).
- Not completely free chimney flues
- Malfunctions in heating systems due to incorrect installation or other reasons.

SYMPTOMS

Difficult breath and movement, headache, derangement, till the loss of consciousness. Sometimes nausea, vomit e diarrhea may appear.

In case of serious poisoning, without a timely medical intervention, you may die rapidly.

HOW TO PREVENT IT

Fundamental measures to avoid accidents

- *thermal systems must be installed and checked by qualified technicians.
- * Remember to check all the systems annually.
- * It is forbidden to place stoves, water heaters and gas heaters with fires in bathrooms and bedrooms.
- *In rooms in which a gas heater, a water heater or any other device with a fire is placed, you must have a special hole for ventilation in a wall, which allows outside air to enter the room.
- * This hole must be left open all the time.
- *All the devices must be connected to an adequate chimney leading to the roof.
- *exhaust smokes of the gas cooker must be collected by a hood connected to a special pipe, separated from the chimney.

According to: law n. 46 of March 13, 1990

WHAT TO DO FIRST IN CASE OF INTOXICATION

Open immediately the windows and fully ventilate the room. Move the intoxicated person away from the place in which he/she got intoxicated with carbon monoxide. Call 118 as soon as possible.