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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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PREPARE TO “FALL BACK” BY CHECKING CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Properly Working Home Heating Devices and Carbon Monoxide Detectors Save Lives

As we turn back the clocks on November 4th and temperatures continue to fall, the Sauk County Health Department wants to remind residents to take action to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

“We start seeing more carbon monoxide poisonings as temperatures drop,” said Tara Hayes, Health Officer, Sauk County Health Department. “Now is the time for Sauk County residents to make sure their heating sources and carbon monoxide detectors are in good working order.”

On average, carbon monoxide poisoning sends about 500 Wisconsinites to the emergency room each year, according to data from the Wisconsin Environmental Public Health Tracking Program. These trips to the ER for carbon monoxide poisoning are preventable when people are prepared.

To protect yourself and your family from carbon monoxide, [follow these safety tips](#):

- **Make sure you have working carbon monoxide detectors.** All homes and duplexes in Wisconsin are required to have detectors on every level, including the basement, but not the attic or storage areas. Detectors can be purchased at most hardware stores for \$20-50. Daylight Savings Time is a good time each year to replace the batteries in your detector and push the “Test” button to be sure it’s working properly. Replace your detector every five years or according to manufacturer’s instructions.
- **Have your furnace or wood-burning stove inspected annually.** Hire a professional to make sure it is functionally sound and vents properly outside the home.
- **Never run a gasoline or propane heater or a grill (gas or charcoal) inside your home or garage.** Any heating system that burns fuel produces carbon monoxide. Use a battery-powered detector where you have fuel burning devices but no electric outlets, such as in tents, cabins, and RVs.

- **Generators should be run at a safe distance (at least 20 feet) from the home.** Never run a generator in the home or garage, or right next to windows or doors.
- **Never run a car in an enclosed space.** Even with a door or window open, carbon monoxide levels can still build up to an unsafe level.

At high levels, carbon monoxide can cause death within minutes. Symptoms of overexposure to carbon monoxide include headache, fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath, nausea, and confusion. If you think you may be experiencing carbon monoxide poisoning, or your detector sounds an alarm, head outside immediately for fresh air and call 911.

Visit the [Wisconsin Department of Health Services website](#) for more information about carbon monoxide poisoning. To learn more about the Wisconsin carbon monoxide detector requirements, visit the [Department of Safety and Professional Services' website](#).

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