

Storms and Carbon Monoxide

As the forecast carries the risk of ice storms, frozen power lines, and power outages could occur. We have learned from past power outages that predictable things happen. People seek alternative means of heating their homes. Physicians and nurses should have a higher sense of suspicion during these times for carbon monoxide poisoning, and consider testing patients who present with headaches or nausea after power outages or severe weather changes. The last ice storms from a few winters ago had a large number of people exposed to and several deaths from carbon monoxide in the Portland area.

The Oregon Poison Center has a few warnings for people if their power goes out:



- We strongly advise you have a battery power carbon monoxide detector and check to see that it is working.
- Never use a charcoal grill, hibachi, camp gas lantern, or portable camping stove inside a home, tent, car or camper.
- Never run a generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine or propane-powered engine inside a basement, garage, or other enclosed structure, even if the doors or windows are open.
- Never use a gas range or oven to heat a home.
- Never burn paper or wood indoors to create heat.
- If you use a fireplace insure that your vents and flues free of debris, especially if winds are high. Flying debris can block ventilation lines.
- Never run a motor vehicle, generator, pressure washer, or any gasoline-powered engine outside an open window, or in a garage even if the door is open, or anywhere exhaust can be vented or sucked into an enclosed area.
- Never leave the motor running in a vehicle parked in an enclosed or partially enclosed space, such as a garage.
- Don't use the car or motor home engine to heat a parked closed vehicle or camper if you are staying in it overnight.
- If you have symptoms of a headache, vomiting, or loss of consciousness, leave your home and call 911. Open all windows and doors and turn off the stove if it is on.

OHA information on Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

<https://public.health.oregon.gov/Preparedness/CurrentHazards/Pages/CarbonMonoxidePoisoning.aspx>

Please call us if you or a loved one is experiencing a poisoning. The Poison Help hotline number is 1-800-222-1222.