

THE YUK REPORT

Expert Poison Information 24/7

Washington Poison Center

1-800-222-1222

Summer 2006

Carbon Monoxide: The Invisible Poison

It is often talked about only during the winter months – so then why are we writing about it in our summer newsletter? . . . Because it can kill any time of year.

Carbon Monoxide, or CO, is a deadly, invisible poison. So invisible that not only can you not see it, but you cannot smell or taste it either.

CO not only kills. CO can cause long-term brain damage. It can cause your kidneys and liver to fail and produce crippling symptoms in your central nervous system.

CO does not care if you are a child or an adult; rich or poor; animal or human; living in Eastern or Western Washington. It does not care if it is winter or summer.

What you must do to help protect yourself and your family from this killer is to know: 1) what makes carbon monoxide; 2) what are the symptoms; and 3) what to do if you think CO has found you or your family.

What can make carbon monoxide? CO is made any time fuel (oil, gas, wood) is burned. During the summer months, we tend to enjoy camping, spending time on the water or picnicking. These activities present situations for possible CO poisoning.

The following should never be in a tent, camper or cabin of a boat, under

also when parked too close to dense trees and plants.

“Teak surfing” – running the engine while someone is clinging to the swim platform, or teak – is a very dangerous activity on motorboats. Last summer two men in their 20’s died teak surfing on Lake Tapps in Auburn, WA. Swimming under a houseboat’s open space or swim platform can be just as deadly as teak surfing.

Did you know...

- ... 11 people call each day with a splash of something in their eyes?
- ... the WPC gives out around 1,000,000 Mr. Yuk stickers each year?
- ... less than 5% of people who call about bites or stings show any significant symptoms?

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of CO poisoning include headache, drowsiness, nausea and vomiting, weakness, fatigue and confusion. Symptoms can mimic the flu or food poisoning. If

several people in your group become ill at the same time, it may not be “just the flu.”

Suspect CO poisoning?

Get everyone to fresh air right away. Call the Washington Poison Center at **1-800-222-1222** for more first aid steps and information. If the person is unconscious or cannot be woken up, call 911 immediately.

awnings or anywhere there is poor ventilation or air circulation:

- charcoal or kerosene heaters
- coal, wood or gas stoves and propane grills
- running cars or campers
- motorboats and houseboats

Running cars or campers can not only poison you with CO if parked too close to tents and awnings but

From the Files

BUG SPRAY

Recently my 3 year-old daughter accidentally sprayed bug repellent directly into her eyes. I called the Poison Center’s toll free number and was given quick, direct and friendly instructions on how to help her. The woman with whom I spoke, Amanda, called back an hour later to check on my daughter. It gave me great peace-of-mind to know there was expert advice so readily available and that someone would call back to check on us. The Washington Poison Center is an asset we cannot do without. Thank you!

Lorin J.
Spokane, WA

The Summer Stings & Bites

There always seems to be an unwanted guest (or many guests) at picnics, camping trips and hikes and even in our homes during the summer. Shooing them away only seems to work for so long. It is when they start biting or stinging you and your guests that you have had enough.



When the directions are read and followed carefully, insect repellants are considered safe. For more tips on using repellants visit www.wapc.org/hazards/creatures.htm.

We are talking about insects. Bees, hornets and wasps are not the only summer pests in Washington. We also have mosquitoes, fleas and ticks.

A person's response to a bite or sting will depend on their sensitivity to the insect's venom. While most people have only mild reactions, those who are allergic to certain insect venom can have more severe symptoms that require emergency treatment.

You cannot stop all insects from biting or stinging, but you can reduce the number of bites and stings you get by following these tips:



- Avoid using scented soaps, perfumes or hair sprays.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored, long-sleeved shirts and pants. Wear shoes and socks.
- Avoid wearing bright colors or flowery print clothing.
- Use insect repellants.

Note about insect repellants

Most insect repellants contain DEET (strengths range from 5%-100%). Choose a product with less than 30% DEET for children and avoid applying it around their eyes and hands. Some repellants are to be used ONLY on clothing, tents, screens and sleeping bags, not directly on the skin.

Bites and stings happen

If there is a stinger, try to remove it promptly by scraping it with a dull, firm surface, such as a credit card, in the opposite direction the stinger is pointing. Wash the sting/bite site with soap and water. Remove jewelry near the bite/sting site as swelling may occur. Apply a cloth-covered ice pack (no more than 15 min. every 30 min.) or a cloth soaked in cold water and the body part above the heart to reduce pain and swelling. If the victim has trouble breathing, call 911 right away. Call the Poison Center, **1-800-222-1222**, for any other first aid questions.

Snake and animal bites also tend to happen during the summer. The Poison Center hotline, **1-800-222-1222**, can also help you with the first aid steps for these bites as well.



Mr. Yuk Stickers Are For You!

Use Mr. Yuk stickers to:

- Teach children to stay away & ask for help
 - Warn yourself to put harmful products out of reach
 - Find the Poison Hotline in an emergency
 - Call the Poison Hotline for more Mr. Yuk stickers
- Call 1-800-222-1222 – ask for free Mr. Yuk Stickers** courtesy of:



&



Support Mr. Yuk

- ✓ The Washington Poison Center is a nonprofit, charitable organization relying on community support. To make a tax-deductible donation, send a check or money order to:
Washington Poison Center
155 NE 100th Street, #400
Seattle, WA 98125-8011
- ✓ Do you have an interesting story to tell about your experiences with the WPC or comments about our hardworking staff? We want to hear from you! Please send your stories or comments to the above address, email them to development@wapc.org or call **1-800-222-1222** and ask for an official "Tell us your story!" form to fill out. Your story may appear in a future issue of this newsletter.

Mr. Yuk thanks you for your help!



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