

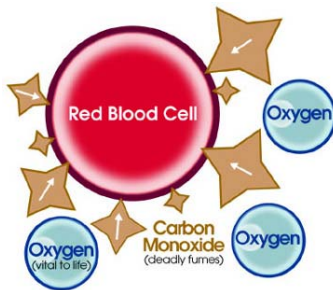
As Yom Tov fast approaches, Hatzolah of Passaic/Clifton EMS would like to take this opportunity to remind all of the dangers posed by Carbon Monoxide. On Yom Tov, we are more likely to leave the oven on, or leave a flame burning on the stove.

### ***The Dangers of Carbon Monoxide***

You can't see or smell carbon monoxide, but at high levels it can kill a person in minutes. Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced whenever any fuel such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal is burned. If appliances that burn fuel are maintained and used properly, the amount of CO produced is usually not hazardous. However, if appliances are not working properly or are used incorrectly, dangerous levels of CO can result. Hundreds of people die accidentally every year from CO poisoning caused by malfunctioning or improperly used fuel-burning appliances. Infants, children, elderly people, and people with anemia or with a history of heart or respiratory disease can be especially susceptible. **Be safe.**



### ***CO Poisoning Symptoms***



Know the symptoms of CO poisoning. At moderate levels, a victim of CO poisoning can get severe headaches, become dizzy, mentally confused, nauseated, or faint. A CO poisoning victim can Chas V'shalom die if these levels persist for a long time. Low levels can cause shortness of breath, mild nausea, and mild headaches, and may have longer term effects on a person's health. Since many of these symptoms are similar to those of the flu, food poisoning, or other illnesses, most people may not think that CO poisoning could be the cause.

### ***Play it Safe***

*If you think that you or someone in your home is experiencing symptoms that could be caused from CO poisoning:*

- **DO GET FRESH AIR IMMEDIATELY.** Open doors and all windows. Turn off combustion appliances and leave the house.
- **DO CALL HATZOLAH. Do not delay.** CO poisoning is a life threatening condition. Hatzolah will contact the proper authorities to deal safely with the CO and respond to treat the victims of CO poisoning.
- **DO GO TO AN EMERGENCY ROOM** and tell the physician you suspect CO poisoning. If CO poisoning has occurred, it can often be diagnosed by a blood test done soon after exposure. The doctor will probably ask the following questions:
  - Do the symptoms occur only in the house?

- Is anyone else in the house complaining of similar symptoms?
- Did everyone's symptoms appear about the same time?
- Are there any fuel-burning appliances in use in the home?
- Has anyone inspected your appliances lately?
- Are you certain they are working properly?

### ***Prevention is the Key to Avoiding Carbon Monoxide Poisoning***



- **DO** have your fuel-burning appliances - including oil and gas furnaces, gas water heaters, gas ranges and ovens, gas dryers, gas or kerosene space heaters, fireplaces, and wood stoves - inspected by a trained professional at the beginning of every heating season. Make certain that the flues and chimneys are connected, in good condition, and not blocked.

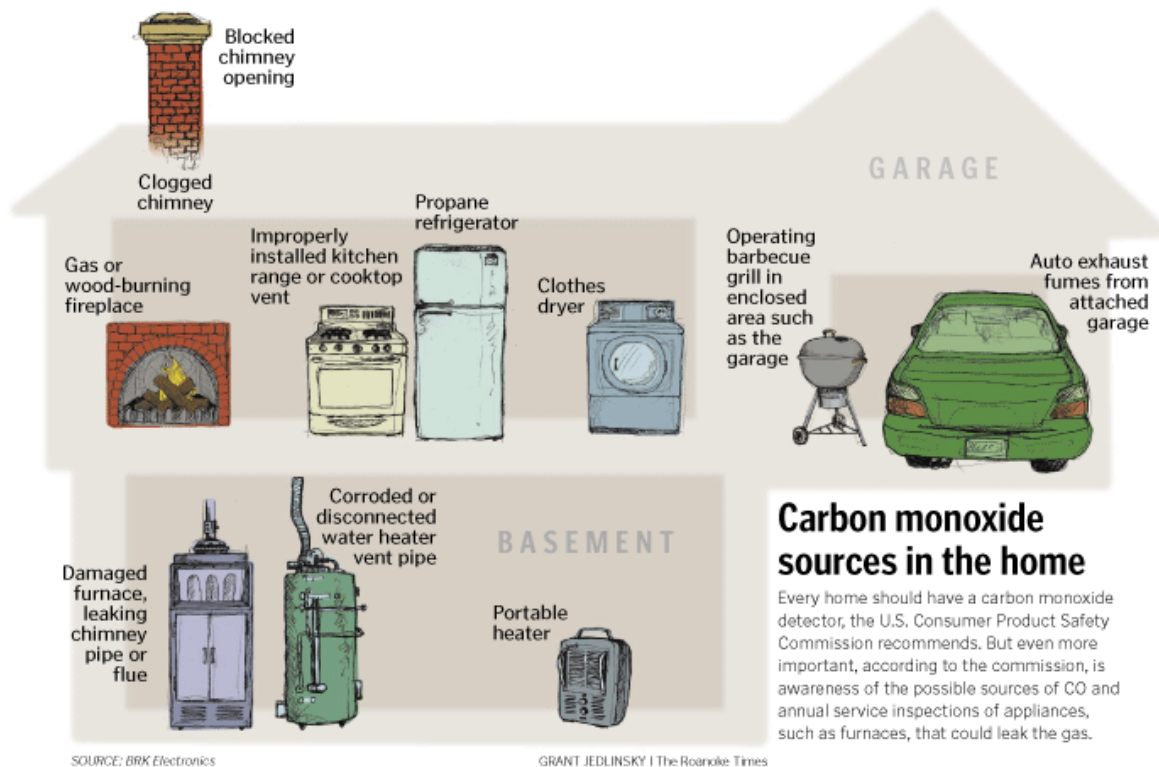
- **DO** choose appliances that vent their fumes to the outside whenever possible,

have them properly installed, and maintain them according to manufacturers' instructions.

- **DO** read and follow all of the instructions that accompany any fuel-burning device. If you cannot avoid using an unvented gas or kerosene space heater, carefully follow the cautions that come with the device. Use the proper fuel and keep doors to the rest of the house open. Crack a window to ensure enough air for ventilation and proper fuel-burning.
- **DON'T** idle the car in a garage - even if the garage door to the outside is open. Fumes can build up very quickly in the garage and living area of your home.
- **DON'T** use a gas oven to heat your home, even for a short time.
- **DON'T** ever use a charcoal grill indoors - even in a fireplace.
- **DON'T** sleep in any room with an unvented gas or kerosene space heater.
- **DON'T** use any gasoline-powered engines (mowers, weed trimmers, snow blowers, chain saws, small engines or generators) in enclosed spaces.
- **DON'T** ignore symptoms, particularly if more than one person is feeling them.

## A Few Words About CO Detectors

Carbon Monoxide Detectors are widely available in stores and you may want to consider buying one as a back-up -- BUT NOT AS A REPLACEMENT for proper use and maintenance of your fuel-burning appliances. However, it is important for you to know that the technology of CO detectors is still developing, that there are several types on the market, and that they are not generally considered to be as reliable as the smoke detectors found in homes today. Some CO detectors have been laboratory-tested, and their performance varied. Some performed well, others failed to alarm even at very high CO levels, and still others alarmed even at very low levels that don't pose any immediate health risk. And unlike a smoke detector, where you can easily confirm the cause of the alarm, CO is invisible and odorless, so it's harder to tell if an alarm is false or a real emergency.



SOURCE: BRK Electronics

GRANT JEDLINSKY | The Roanoke Times

### Preventing carbon monoxide poisoning

- Have your heating system, water heater and any other gas-, oil-, or coal-burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.
- Install a battery-operated carbon

monoxide detector in your home and check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. If the detector sounds, leave your home immediately and call 911.

- Seek prompt medical attention if you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning and are feeling

dizzy, light-headed or nauseated.

- Don't use a generator, charcoal grill, camp stove or other gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside your home, basement or garage. When using a device outside, keep it away from windows.

- Don't run a car or truck inside a garage attached to your house, even if you leave the door open.

- Don't burn anything in a stove or fireplace that isn't vented.
- Don't heat your house with a gas oven.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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### ***So what's a Consumer to Do?***

First, don't let buying a CO detector lull you into a false sense of security. Preventing CO from becoming a problem in your home is better than relying on an alarm. Follow the checklist of **DOs** and **DON'Ts** above.

Second, if you shop for a CO detector, do some research on features and don't select solely on the basis of cost. Non-governmental organizations such as Consumers Union (publisher of Consumer Reports), the American Gas Association, and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) can help you make an informed decision. Look for UL certification on any detector you purchase.

Carefully follow manufacturers' instructions for its placement, use, and maintenance. If the CO detector alarm goes off:

- Make sure it is your CO detector and not your smoke detector.
- Check to see if any member of the household is experiencing symptoms of poisoning.
- If they are, get them out of the house immediately and call Hatzolah immediately.
- If no one is feeling symptoms, ventilate the home with fresh air, turn off all potential sources of CO - your oil or gas furnace, gas water heater, gas range and oven, gas dryer, gas or kerosene space heater and any vehicle or small engine.
- Have a qualified technician inspect your fuel-burning appliances and chimneys to make sure they are operating correctly and that there is nothing blocking the fumes from being vented out of the house.

**Hatzolah of Passaic/Clifton EMS reminds you that in the event that you do suspect CO Poisoning, immediately call our emergency hotline at **973-472-1002**.**

Hatzolah would like to wish you a happy and healthy Yom Tov.

This article is brought to you by  
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לז"נ יכה בת ר' יהודה ע"ה