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**Falling Temperatures Increase Risk of Carbon Monoxide Poisoning – Stay Safe This Winter**

Oklahoma City, OK – A bitter cold front is expected to enter Oklahoma, which could bring temperatures down to below-average. As the state braces for a cold snap, the Oklahoma Poison Center, a program of the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences College of Pharmacy, urges residents to take extra precautions to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning as they heat their homes for the winter season. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that can be deadly when inhaled in large quantities, and it poses a heightened risk as people rely on heating devices for warmth during cold weather.

**Don't Heat Your Home with Dangerous Devices:**
When temperatures drop, many people use grills, stoves or other fuel-burning appliances to heat their homes. The Oklahoma Poison Center strongly advises against using any gasoline or charcoal-burning devices indoors, including portable generators, charcoal grills, camp stoves, or space heaters not designed for indoor use. These devices produce carbon monoxide and should never be used in confined spaces like homes, basements, garages or near windows.

**What You Need to Know About Carbon Monoxide:**Carbon monoxide is produced when fuels such as natural gas, gasoline, charcoal, propane, wood or oil are burned. It can build up quickly in an enclosed or poorly ventilated area, causing poisoning symptoms that can range from mild to life-threatening. Early signs of CO poisoning include:

* Headache
* Dizziness
* Weakness
* Upset stomach
* Vomiting
* Chest pain
* Confusion

**Severe Symptoms May Include:**

* Fainting
* Irregular heartbeat
* Coma
* Seizures
* Stopping breathing
* Heart attack

**What to Do if You Suspect Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:**
If you suspect carbon monoxide exposure or your CO detector sounds, get to fresh air immediately and call the Oklahoma Poison Center at (800) 222-1222 for advice. Anyone experiencing moderate or severe symptoms should immediately seek medical attention by calling 911 or going to the nearest emergency department.

**Preventing CO Poisoning:**
The Oklahoma Poison Center encourages residents to take the following safety measures to prevent CO poisoning:

* Install a carbon monoxide detector: Make sure you have a battery-operated or battery-backed CO detector installed in your home. If you already have one, now is a great time to check or replace the battery. Place detectors away from cooking or heating appliances and avoid placing them in humid areas like bathrooms.
* Check vents and chimneys: Make sure vents, chimneys and exhaust pipes are clear of debris or blockages to ensure proper ventilation when heating your home.
* Never use a grill, stove or generator indoors: Do not use any type of fuel-burning device, such as a charcoal grill, stove or portable generator, inside your home, basement or garage. Always use them outdoors and far away from doors, windows and vents.

**If the Carbon Monoxide Detector Goes Off:**

* Evacuate immediately and move to fresh air.
* Call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department if anyone is experiencing moderate to severe symptoms, has heart problems, is pregnant, or if an infant has been exposed.
* Contact local authorities (gas company, fire department or appliance repair service) to find and fix the source of the CO leak.
* Do not return inside until the source of the carbon monoxide has been identified and corrected.

**Save the Poison Center's Number:**
In case of suspected poisoning, call the Oklahoma Poison Center at (800) 222-1222, available 24/7. Pharmacists and registered nurses are on hand to provide immediate assistance. The Oklahoma Poison Center is a program of the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy at OU Health Sciences. For more information on carbon monoxide safety and prevention, visit [OklahomaPoison.org](http://OklahomaPoison.org).

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**About Oklahoma Poison Center**

Oklahoma Poison Center is dedicated to providing expert advice and support in cases of poisoning and exposure to harmful substances. Our mission is to prevent poisonings and reduce their impact through education, prevention, and providing emergency treatment recommendations. The Oklahoma Poison Center is a program of the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy.

**The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences**

The University of Oklahoma Health Sciences is one of the nation’s few academic health centers with all health professions colleges — Allied Health, Dentistry, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Public Health and Graduate Studies. OU Health Sciences serves approximately 4,000 students in more than 70 undergraduate and graduate degree programs on campuses in Oklahoma City and Tulsa and is the academic and research partner of OU Health, the state’s only comprehensive academic healthcare system. OU Health Sciences is ranked 129 out of over 2,849 institutions in funding received from the National Institutes of Health, according to the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research. For more information, visit ouhsc.edu.