



CARBON MONOXIDE

I. Protocol Overview

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, and lighter-than-air gas that naturally occurs as a product of respiration and combustion. The predominant manifestations of carbon monoxide poisoning are cardiovascular and neurological effects similar to the flu. Inhalation of carbon monoxide gas typically leads to headache, dizziness, mild nausea, and confusion, which might progress to dyspnea, tachypnea, syncope, cyanosis, and metabolic acidosis. High levels of CO can be fatal, causing death within minutes. Home carbon monoxide detectors should be installed if available.

For all suspected chemical exposures, consult the Poison Control Center (800-222-1222) located at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Information and treatment advice is available to the public and healthcare professionals at no charge.

Simple handheld carboxyhemoglobin oximeters should be utilized in the field when available for suspected carbon monoxide and hydrogen cyanide exposure. Carboxyhemoglobin oximeters can be utilized to measure carbon monoxide serum levels. Carbon monoxide can be detected in environmental samples through the use of gas chromatography with flame ionization detectors (GC/FID). In food samples, gas chromatography mass spectrometry (GC/MS) headspace analysis is used.

The Delaware Public Health Laboratory does not perform this testing. Contact the CDC or the Poison Control Center.

II. Contact Information

24/7 CDC Emergency Contact Number: 1-888-295-5156

Poison Control Center: 215-386-2100

III. CDC Website

<http://www.cdc.gov/co/default.htm>