

## **Camping: The Dangers of Carbon Monoxide**

Following another campsite tragedy involving carbon monoxide poisoning, it is important to remember this unseen danger and take steps to make sure you and your family is safe.

Gas poisoning can be deadly and is often not noticeable until it's too late. Harmful levels of gas can build up slowly over a number of hours and can be fatal. Many modern tents feature zipped-in or sewn-in groundsheets which provides less ventilation and therefore less of an escape route for gas building up over time.

The following are recommendations for safer control of carbon monoxide:

- Never cook in your tent and be aware of potential sources of gas
- Always ventilate your tent properly
- If you cook in a porch or canopy attached to your tent make sure it is well ventilated
- Leave cooking equipment outside your tent at night
- Be aware that barbeques give off carbon monoxide during and after use
- Always store gas bottles upright
- Never store gas bottles in your tent or unvented area
- Take particular care of gas appliances in your tent such gas lanterns and gas heaters
- Check all gas hose connections for leaks before each use\*
- Be aware that car exhausts give off carbon monoxide which can get trapped in a tent
- Take a carbon monoxide detector with you to give you an early warning of gas build up

\*The easiest way to check for minor leaks is by smearing washing-up liquid around the joins and watch for bubbles of escaping gas.

### **What are the symptoms?<sup>1</sup>**

The symptoms of mild carbon monoxide poisoning may be non-specific and similar to those of viral cold and flu infections or food poisoning: headache, nausea, abdominal pain, dizziness, sore throat and dry cough.

But, unlike flu infection, carbon monoxide poisoning doesn't cause a high temperature. In children, the symptoms are similar to those of a stomach upset, with nausea and vomiting.

More severe poisoning can result in a fast and irregular heart rate, hyperventilation, confusion, drowsiness and difficulty breathing. Seizures and loss of consciousness may also occur. Some symptoms can occur a few days or even months after exposure to carbon monoxide. These may include confusion, loss of memory and problems with coordination.

**Treatment for Carbon Monoxide poisoning<sup>2</sup>** includes removing patient from the source of gas, providing basic life support and giving oxygen before admission to hospital

[<sup>1,2</sup>Source: [bbc.co.uk/health](http://bbc.co.uk/health)]