

Snow-Related Poisoning Exposures

Protect Yourself and Be Prepared

Safety Tips to Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning:

- Check the batteries in your carbon monoxide detector and smoke detector. If you don't have either detector, install before the storm hits.
- Clear any snow accumulation from all outside dryer and heating vents.
- Remove snow from car exhaust pipe(s) before sitting in car and letting it warm up. Failure to remove snow can result in carbon monoxide poisoning. Be sure there is ample room for air to circulate behind your car to allow any exhaust to dissipate and not build up around your car.
- DO NOT bring a portable gas powered generator into the home or garage –
 - Do not place them outside near any open windows/doors
 - They should be at least 25 feet from any house
- DO NOT bring other gas powered equipment, propane stoves, propane lights, or kerosene camping stoves into the house or garage.
- DO NOT heat your home with your stove.
- DO NOT cook with charcoal indoors or inside your house or garage.
- DO NOT idle a car in a closed garage. Once you pull in, immediately turn off the engine.
- Keep your home well ventilated. If need be, keep a window slightly cracked to allow air flow.
- During storm cleanup, keep all gas powered cleaning equipment outside away from the house when in use. Bringing and using them indoors could result in serious injury.

If you suspect Carbon Monoxide Poisoning, Take Immediate Action:

1. If a loved one is unconscious or unresponsive, get them out of the house and call 911 immediately.
2. Exit the house/building immediately. Do not waste time opening windows to "air" it out; this will delay your escape and cause you to breathe in more dangerous fumes.
3. Contact your local fire department/energy provider.

4. Call the NJ Poison Experts, 800-222-1222, for immediate treatment advice. Do not waste time looking for information on the internet about carbon monoxide poisoning. Call us for fast, free and accurate information.

General Safety Tips:

- Have a flashlight with fresh batteries ready to use (you may have used the flashlight during previous storms including Hurricane Sandy, replace the batteries if you did).
 - o Make sure to use a flashlight when giving or taking medication. Read all labels carefully.
- Have a battery-operated radio available and be sure the batteries are fresh.
- Risk for hypothermia increases with frigid temperatures. Infants, children, and the elderly are at greatest risk for hypothermia.
 - o Signs and symptoms include headaches, sleepiness, fatigue, confusion and irritability, nausea, vomiting, irregular heartbeat, impaired vision and coordination, and death
 - o Stay warm and dress appropriately! For prolonged exposure to cold, wear insulated or layered clothing that does not retain moisture. Wear a head cover!
 - o Avoid over-exertion and excessive sweating in the cold. Snow shoveling is a very intense exercise. If you are not in top physical shape, don't attempt it yourself.
 - o Warm beverages can help increase the body temperature.
 - o Avoid drinking alcohol, especially in cold temperatures.
 - o Some medications may increase your risk. Check with your doctor, pharmacist or call the Poison Control Center
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Safety Tips to Prevent Food Spoilage during a Power Outage:

- With the threat of power outages, it is important to be careful about food stored in refrigerators and freezers. Food-borne illness, also known as food poisoning, results from the eating of food that is contaminated with harmful bacteria, viruses or other foreign material. Contamination is caused by improper food handling and preparation practices. The symptoms of food-borne illness are flu-like and may include abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and fever.
- In preparing for a power outage, make the temperature colder than usual on both freezers and refrigerators. This will prolong the cold after a power outage.
- During a power outage, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed and open them only when necessary.
- Place a refrigerator thermometer in the center of the middle shelf and check the temperature. If it has risen to 40 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, discard any potentially spoiled foods. Such foods include meat,

poultry, fish, dairy and egg products, soft cheese, cooked beans, cooked rice, cooked potatoes, cooked pasta, potato salad, custard and pudding.

- Fill freezers to capacity, but refrigerators need room for air to circulate.
- When power is restored, allow time for the refrigerator to reach below 40 degrees Fahrenheit before restocking.
- If it looks funny, smells funny or if you are just unsure, "When in doubt, throw it out!"