

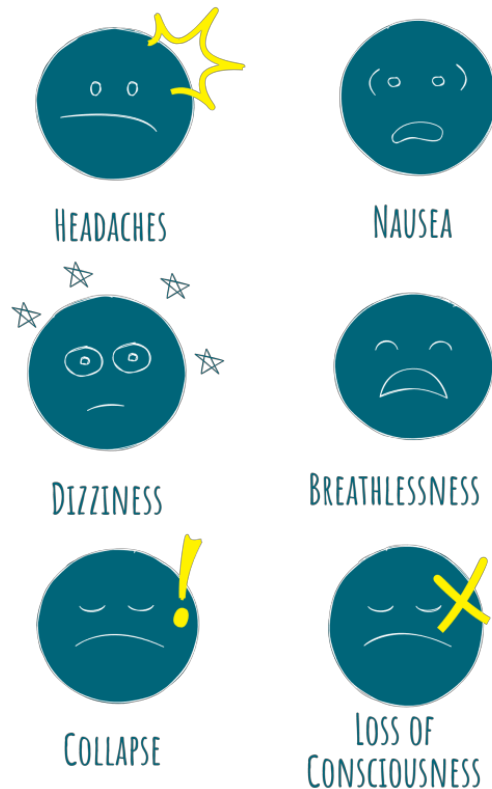
CARBON MONOXIDE

What is Carbon Monoxide (CO)?

It's an odourless, invisible and highly toxic gas, often referred to as the silent killer. Small amounts of CO can poison you. Annually, about 30 people die and thousands are affected by CO poisoning in the UK.

Where does CO come from?

CO can be produced from any carbon-based appliance, including gas cookers, gas fires, gas barbecues, Calor gas heaters, paraffin heaters, etc. Other fuel and cooking appliances, such as those using charcoal, peat, coal, wood (including wood burning stoves), as well as petrol, oil, or LPG can produce CO if working inefficiently or without proper ventilation.



Signs and Symptoms in People

People often say constant exhaustion was the first symptom. Other signs that could point to CO poisoning are:

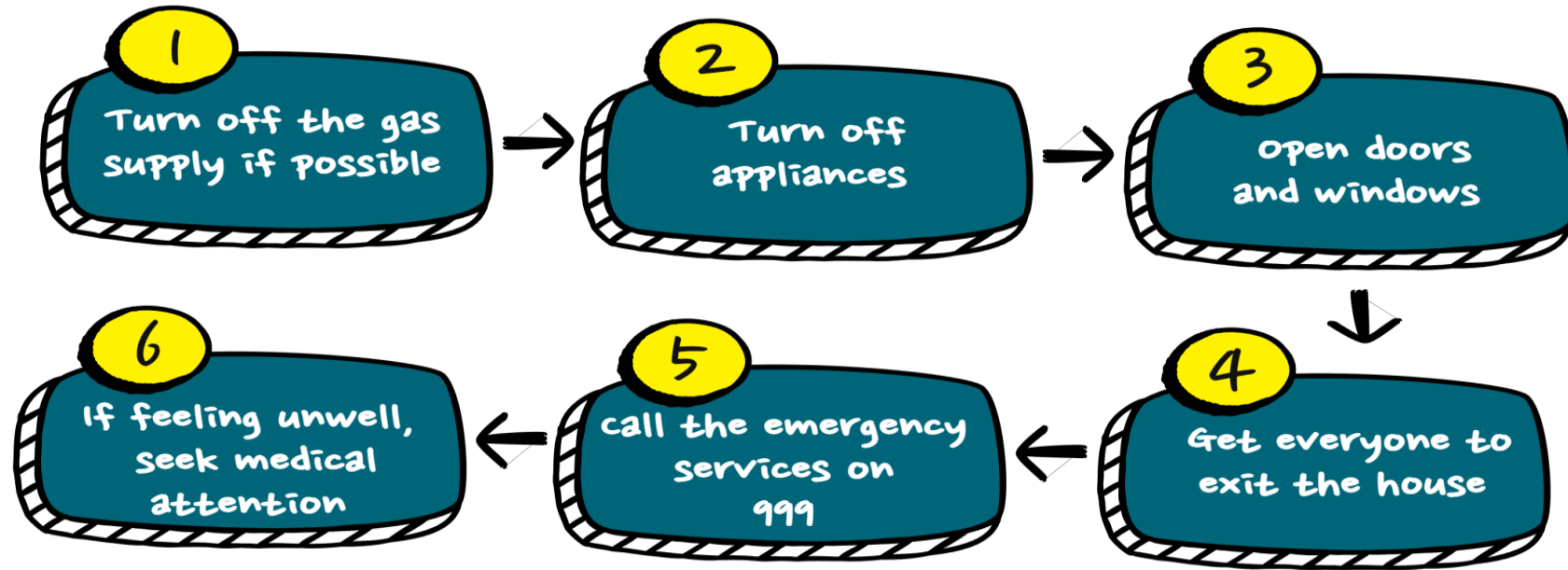
- Symptoms that only happen when at home
- Symptoms that disappear or improve when people leave home and re-appear when they return
- People in the same house experience similar symptoms around the same time
- Pets show symptoms around the same time as people

Signs and Symptoms at Home

When making a home visit, there are a numerous signs you should be aware of. Look to see if:

- The flame on a cooker is lazy and is a yellow or orange colour when it should be blue.
- Soot, yellow or brown staining on or around appliances.
- Pilot lights that frequently blow out.
- Too much condensation on windows or walls
- Flues, used chimneys, and vents that are blocked either on purpose or by accident, such as a bird's nest

What to do if you think Carbon Monoxide might be present:



Take Action!

If you think your client is at risk:

- Have a Gas Safe Registered engineer look at any gas appliances and boiler; have an OFTEC registered engineer look at any oil fuel appliances; have a HETAS registered engineer look at any solid fuel appliance or used chimneys.
- If cost is an issue, talk with your supervisor to learn more about any support that might be available.
- If the risk continues after the engineer's visit, the gas is turned off, or the boiler condemned, talk with your supervisor again. Your organisation should ensure there is a procedure to provide emergency heating and cooking and help to address any problems that may arise.

To find out more about the Think CO project and our free workshops around the UK, please contact us on:

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