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LAKE COUNTY GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

As we move into colder weather, Lake County General Health District (LCGHD) is reminding everyone to protect themselves from sources of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning that are more commonly in use this time of year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) more than 400 Americans die from unintentional CO poisoning each year. It is also reported that each year more than 20,000 Americans visit the emergency room, and more than 4,000 Americans are hospitalized due to CO poisoning.

In Ohio, incidents have been reported in Montgomery County where 7 people were treated for symptoms of CO poisoning, and a family of 4 died from CO poisoning in Genoa Township earlier this year.

CO is an odorless, colorless gas that can cause sudden illness and death if you breathe it. CO is found in combustion fumes, such as those produced by furnaces, water heaters, small gasoline engines, stoves, generators, lanterns, and gas ranges, or by burning charcoal and wood. People and animals in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces with these items can be poisoned and die from breathing in CO.

Bert Mechenbier, Environmental Health Supervisor for the LCGHD said, “The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion.” According to Mechenbier, “People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol can die from CO poisoning before they ever have symptoms. If you think you may have CO poisoning, call your doctor right away.”

Mechenbier also provided the following tips to prevent accidental CO poisoning:

- **Have your heating system, water heater, and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician each year.**
- **Have at least one working carbon monoxide detector (They make great gifts!). Check the detector’s batteries twice annually, at the same time smoke detector batteries are checked. If the detector sounds, leave your home immediately, and call 911. Also, check the end of life date on the detector, as it may need to be replaced.**
- **Seek medical attention if you think you have CO poisoning, and are feeling dizzy, lightheaded or nauseous.**
- **Do NOT use generators, grills, camp stoves, or other gasoline, propane, natural gas, or charcoal-burning products inside a home, basement, garage, camper, or even outside near an open window. This is especially important to remember during a power outage.**

- Do **NOT** warm up, or run a car or truck inside a garage attached to your house, even if you leave the garage door open. Make sure to shut off vehicles when parking in a garage.
- Do **NOT** burn anything in a stove or fireplace that is not vented.
- Do **NOT** heat your house with a gas oven.

If you have questions about CO poisoning, call LCGHD at (440) 350-2543 or visit their website at https://www.lcghd.org/?page_id=3722 .

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