

# Protect yourself from Carbon Monoxide poisoning

## What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon Monoxide is a highly poisonous gas that has no smell, colour or taste. It can be released by any appliance that burns oil, solid fuel, wood or gas, including boilers, if they are not properly installed and maintained.

## What are the symptoms?

When you inhale Carbon Monoxide it starves your body of oxygen. The symptoms can feel like lots of other every day illnesses:

Headaches	Dizziness
Nausea	Collapse
Breathlessness	Loss of consciousness

Even low-level exposure over a long period can cause lasting damage to your health, including permanent brain damage. More serious cases can cause death.

## Do not ignore these symptoms if:

- Other people in your home or building are having similar symptoms.
- You've recently moved into your home.
- Symptoms disappear when you go out or go on holiday, but return when you come back.
- Symptoms tend to be seasonal e.g. headaches during the winter when the central heating is used more often.

## Other danger signs include:

- Sooting or staining on or around the appliance.
- Excessive condensation in the room where the appliance is installed.
- Lazy yellow/orange coloured gas flames on cookers or boilers, rather than a sharp blue one.

## How can I protect myself?

1. All boilers and fuel-burning appliances **MUST** be serviced annually using a qualified engineer registered with the appropriate organisation:



**Gas Safe Register (gas)**  
[www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)  
Tel: 0800 408 5500



**NIACS (all fuels)**  
**Northern Ireland**  
**Association**  
**of Chimney Sweeps**  
[www.niacs.co.uk](http://www.niacs.co.uk)



**OFTEC (oil)**  
**Oil Firing Technical**  
**Association**  
[www.oftec.org](http://www.oftec.org)  
Tel: 0845 65 85 080



**Northern Ireland Coal**  
**Advisory Service (solid fuel)**  
[www.coaladvisoryservice.com](http://www.coaladvisoryservice.com)  
Tel: 0845 712 5300

2. As a secondary precaution, install an audible Carbon Monoxide alarm. You can buy one from DIY stores or supermarkets from around £20. If you have difficulties installing an alarm ask a friend, relative or carer to help (follow the manufacturer's instructions for installation and maintenance guidance).
3. If you require further information, advice or practical support, please contact Age NI specialist local advisors on freephone **0800 808 7575**.

## What should I do if affected?

- Open doors and windows for ventilation and go outside into the fresh air.
- Go to your GP or nearest A&E department.
- If it is urgent, call **999** for an ambulance.
- Call the relevant emergency advice line:  
Gas Emergency Service (24 hours) **0800 002 001**  
Oil (OFTEC) **0845 65 85 080**.

**For further advice call the helpline on**

**0800 0320 121**  
or text phone **028 9054 6896**

or visit The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland  
website [www.hseni.gov.uk/watchout](http://www.hseni.gov.uk/watchout)