## Testing your CO alarm

It's important to regularly test your CO alarm, ideally at least once a month.

Remember to pay close attention to the alarm's battery life and when it will need replacing. Most alarms will last between five and seven years, with some lasting for as long as 10 years.

Many CO alarms have an expiry date marked on them. Make a note of this and replace your alarm before it reaches this date.

## What should I do if I suspect CO?

If you suspect CO in your home, follow these steps:

**Open all doors and windows**

**Move outside into fresh air**

**Call the Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999***

**For more information visit cadentgas.com/co**

If you require this document in an alternative format or language, please call us on **0800 389 8000** or email **wecare@cadentgas.com**

*All calls are recorded and may be monitored.

# Carbon monoxide The Silent Killer

## Why is carbon monoxide (CO) dangerous?

CO is a colourless, odourless, poisonous gas that you can't see, hear, smell or taste.

It can be produced by anything that burns carbon-based fuels, including gas, oil, wood, coal, petrol or diesel. That could be your cooker, boiler, wood burner or fire. These are items we frequently use to cook our food, heat our homes or drive our vehicles.

CO poisoning can affect anyone and happens when you breathe in even a small amount. So, it's important to know the symptoms to look out for.

They can be similar to a flu, tiredness or a hangover, but if your symptoms lessen when you're in fresh air, it might be CO poisoning. The main symptoms are:
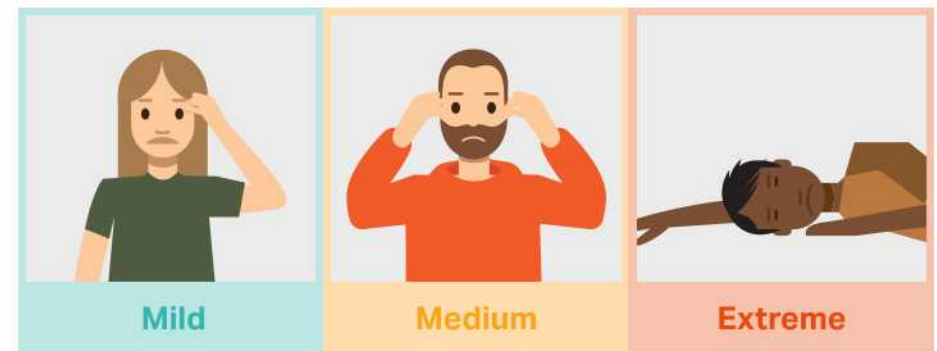
| Mild | Medium | Extreme |
|---|---|---|
| Slight headache | Severe headache | Unconsciousness |
| Nausea | Confusion/forgetful | Convulsions |
| Vomiting | Drowsiness | Cardio respiratory failure |
| Fatigue | Fast heart rate | Death |

If you think you've been exposed to CO and are showing any of the symptoms, you should seek medical help.

# How can I check for signs of CO?
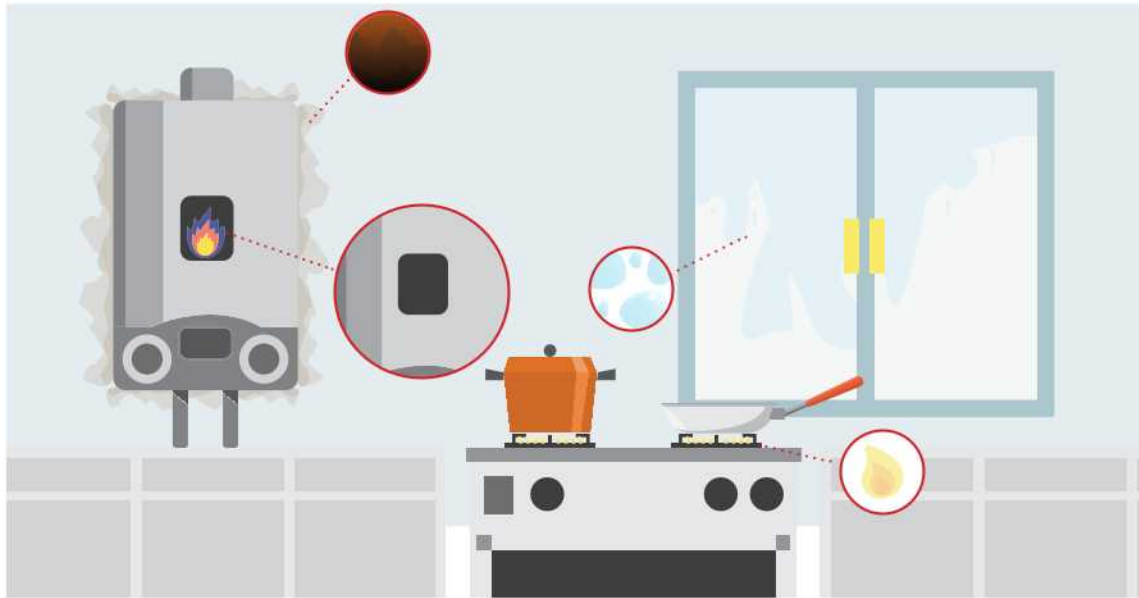


There are several signs to look out for that could mean CO is present including:

- Flames look lazy and are yellow or orange rather than blue.
  (Except fuel-effect fires or fuel-less appliances that display orange flames).

- Soot or yellow-brown staining around an appliance.

- Increased condensation on windows.

- Pilot light frequently blows out.

If you spot any of these signs it doesn't mean that there is CO present, but it might be best to get your gas appliances checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

## How can I reduce the risks?

To minimise the risk of CO poisoning, you should take the following steps:

- **Purchase** an audible CO alarm and make sure it's positioned correctly and tested regularly.

- **Book** an annual service for your gas appliances and ensure they are installed correctly by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Visit gassaferegister.co.uk to find an engineer near you.

- **Check** your flues and get chimneys swept at least once a year by a registered professional.

# A CO alarm could save your life

A CO alarm is the best way to alert you that CO is present.

Make sure your CO alarm complies with **British Standards BS EN50291-1.** Look for the BSI Kitemark logo and avoid purchasing your alarm online unless you're certain it meets these standards.



### Where to place your CO alarm

Always check and follow manufacturer's instructions when placing and testing the alarm. But here are a few points to keep in mind:

- Any room with a fuel-burning appliance should have a CO alarm placed at door height, between 1-3 metres away from the appliance.

- Don't place the alarm too close to any appliance that produces a flame.

- Don't put the alarm in cupboards, behind furniture, or near outside doors windows or ventilation equipment (such as extractor fans). This will stop it from working properly.



Between 1-3 meters away from a appliance