

PUBLIC HEALTH FACT SHEET



HEALTH DIVISION

Department of Health & Human Services

oakgov.com/health

Combustion Pollutants

What are Combustion Pollutants?

Woodstoves, kerosene heaters with no vents, gas stoves and gas space heaters all make combustion pollutants. The common pollutants from these items are carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and respirable particles.

How do Combustion Pollutants affect Health?

Carbon Monoxide is a gas you can't see or smell. It stops the flow of oxygen through the body. Low levels make people tired. It can also cause chest pain in people with heart disease. At high levels, it can cause headaches, dizziness, weakness, nausea, and confusion. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are often mistaken for flu or food poisoning. High levels of carbon monoxide can cause unconsciousness and death. Pregnant women, infants, the elderly and people with low iron in their blood or with a history of heart or respiratory problems, can be very sensitive to it.

Nitrogen dioxide in high levels can irritate the eyes, nose and throat. It can also cause shortness of breath. High levels or continued exposure to low levels can increase the risk of respiratory infection or worsen existing lung diseases such as asthma. Children and people with asthma and other respiratory diseases are at higher risk.

Respirable particles are released when fuels do not burn completely. These particles can lodge in the lungs and damage lung tissue. Also, other pollutants which can cause cancer (such as radon) attach to these small particles.

OVER
→

How to Reduce Health Risks:

Steps to Reduce Health Problems:

- ! Purchase only vented gas space heaters and furnaces.
- ! If you must use unvented space heaters, adjust any flame to proper height.
- ! Open doors to other rooms in the house when using unvented space heaters.
- ! Use only K-1 kerosene in kerosene heaters.
- ! Install and use exhaust fans vented to outdoors over gas stoves.
- ! Open flues when gas fireplaces are in use.
- ! Have trained professionals inspect, clean, and tune-up heating systems (furnaces, flues, and chimneys) annually. Repair any leaks.
- ! Choose properly sized woodstoves that meet EPA emission standards. Make certain that doors on all wood stoves fit tightly.
- ! Change filters on central heating and cooling systems and air cleaners according to manufacturer's directions.

**For more information on Combustion Pollutants, call
(248) 858-1406 or toll free 1 (800) 848-5533.**

For additional copies, visit our website at www.oakgov.com/health or contact:

The Oakland County Health Division will not deny participation in its programs based on race, sex, religion, national origin, age or disability. State and federal eligibility requirements apply for certain programs.