



# Media Release

SA Health

Tuesday, 5 June 2018

## **CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING WARNING**

South Australians firing up their heaters to escape the winter chill are being warned about the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning.

SA Health's Acting Director of Public Health Services, Dr Chris Lease, said there had been a 60 per cent increase in Emergency Department presentations for carbon monoxide related poisoning conditions so far in 2017-18, compared to 2016-17.

"Carbon monoxide is a 'silent killer' because it has no smell, taste or colour, and you can die from inhalation before you are even aware of it," Dr Lease said.

"Any appliance that uses gas, oil, kerosene or wood can produce carbon monoxide, and operating appliances like gas and wood heaters in poorly vented areas, or where chimney and flue-pipes are blocked, can increase the chances of carbon monoxide being produced.

"The gas can build up in unventilated rooms and people can inhale it without realising, so it is important to make sure that there is adequate ventilation with fresh air.

"People also need to be aware of carbon dioxide poisoning symptoms which can include persistent tiredness, shortness of breath, headaches, nausea, vomiting and loss of consciousness.

"Babies and young children, pregnant women, the elderly and immobile and those with respiratory problems are most vulnerable to carbon monoxide poisoning.

"There have been 24 ED presentations from carbon monoxide related poisoning in 2017-18, and our concern is that number could rise as more people use gas appliances, such as unflued gas heaters."

MFS Commander Community Safety and Resilience, Greg Howard, said people should be aware of the dangers of carbon monoxide and how to ensure their safety when using gas appliances.

"Anyone purchasing gas appliances, especially unflued gas or ethanol fuelled heaters, must always ensure they are installed by a qualified tradesperson and only used in rooms with adequate ventilation," Mr Howard said.

"It is important to never use heaters or appliances marked as 'outdoor use only' for heating inside or in any fully enclosed area that doesn't have adequate ventilation. This includes LPG and patio heaters, as well as barbecues."

Technical Regulator from Office of the Technical Regulator, Rob Faunt, said regular maintenance of appliances is critical to avoid the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning.

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### For more information

Call the SA Health Media Line  
Telephone: 08 8226 6488

 [www.twitter.com/sahealth](http://www.twitter.com/sahealth)  [www.youtube.com/sahealthaustralia](http://www.youtube.com/sahealthaustralia)



“People should ensure all gas appliances are serviced by a licensed gasfitter at the manufacturer recommended service intervals or at least once every two years,” Mr Faunt said.

“It is recommended that the appliance is checked for correct installation and that it is not adversely affected by any mechanical air movement systems, such as ventilation or exhaust fans or air conditioning distribution systems.”

Anyone who experiences symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning should seek medical attention immediately.

In the case of emergency, always dial triple zero (000).

**SA ED presentations from carbon monoxide related poisoning:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>	<b>2017-18</b>
<b>Cases</b>	19	28	29	15	24

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