



23 June 2015

Poisons experts issue warning about increased danger of charcoal poisoning this Winter

Five cases of carbon monoxide poisoning in the last two weeks has left 13 people requiring hospital treatment after burning barbeque coals or charcoal briquettes indoors.

The NSW Poisons Information Centre has issued a warning to the community in the current cold weather to avoid burning charcoal indoors and bringing outdoor heaters or hot barbeque coals indoors.

“Carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless and tasteless gas, which can be toxic and is the reason why it can be so dangerous,” Genevieve Adamo, Senior Specialist in Poisons Information at The NSW Poisons Information Centre said.

“Poisoning most commonly occurs in enclosed spaces so it is important that people make sure they are barbequing and using outdoor heaters in an open area and never burn barbeque coals indoors”

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are non-specific and can include:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Dizziness

Prolonged exposure can have severe consequences, including unconsciousness and in some instances, death.

Most of these incidents occur when charcoal is burnt inside at night for heat, often in barbeques. This carbon monoxide poisoning often involves multiple members of a household from young infants to the elderly.

In a study of cases reported to the NSW Poisons Information Centre between 2004 and 2012 more than 46 people suffered ill effects. In these cases all but one person needed to be hospitalised and eight victims lost consciousness.

**If you suspect someone has been exposed contact the
Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26**

Media Enquiries: Sarah Palmer | 9845 0512