

## Summary — Summer Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning is not a health risk most people associate with summertime activities. But that misconception can have serious consequences.

After treating the first CO poisoning victims of the 2012 summer season, physicians at the Hyperbaric Medicine Center at Utah Valley Regional Medical Center made a push to warn the community about the dangers of CO poisoning. A press release was sent to all media covering Utah County including:

- The Daily Herald Newspaper
- The Deseret News
- The Salt Lake Tribune
- NBC, CBS, ABC, Fox affiliates in the Salt Lake City market

Media were invited to interview physicians and tour the hyperbaric chamber to demonstrate how patients are treated for CO poisoning.

The Daily Herald and Fox-13 both responded to the press release. The Daily Herald ran a story on Thursday, June 21 — see link that follows:

[http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/carbon-monoxide-poisoning-still-a-risk-during-summer-months/article\\_a659efcd-2419-5237-a0de-038cfd047278.html](http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/carbon-monoxide-poisoning-still-a-risk-during-summer-months/article_a659efcd-2419-5237-a0de-038cfd047278.html)

Fox-13 aired a story on Tuesday, June 19 — see link that follows:

<http://fox13now.com/2012/06/19/intermountain-healthcare-warns-of-carbon-monoxide-dangers>

In the summer of 2011, the Hyperbaric Medicine Center saw 11 patients for emergency CO poisoning treatment. This summer, the Center has treated three patients. Public education about the potential of CO poisoning at any time of the year is making an impact.

## **CO POISONING A DANGEROUS PROBLEM ANY TIME OF YEAR**

June 18 — PROVO — Ask people to name their top summertime health concerns and carbon monoxide poisoning probably wouldn't be high on the list.

But local physicians are already seeing what happens when people forget that the odorless, tasteless gas can be dangerous at any time of the year.

"We had our first two patients of the 'outdoor' carbon monoxide season last week and there's a high probability we'll see more before the summer season is over. Everyone needs to be aware that it isn't just a problem in the winter," said Gene Worth, MD, director of the [Hyperbaric Medicine Center](#) at Utah Valley Regional Medical Center.

One patient came in after the carbon monoxide level in his blood rose to 35 percent. He had been running a gasoline-powered concrete saw in his basement without proper ventilation. He called 911 after becoming lightheaded and nauseous and then realizing his CO monitor was going off.

The patient responded well to the emergency treatment and hyperbaric oxygen therapy he received at Utah Valley Regional. But the situation could easily have been much worse. Carbon monoxide levels that reach between 40 and 50 percent can result in loss of consciousness, coma and death.

In 2011, Utah Valley Regional's Hyperbaric Medicine Center saw 11 patients for emergency treatment – five poisoned from emissions from being towed behind a boat on Utah Lake and six poisoned by placing gasoline-powered equipment too close to a living area.

"Don't let a day of fun on the lake or that home improvement project turn into a tragedy. Remember that carbon monoxide can be deadly any time of the year," said Dr. Worth.

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