

## **Cooler Temperatures Increase Risk for Carbon Monoxide Poisoning**

### *Improper Use of Generators, Heating or Cooking Devices Can be Source of Exposure*

As outdoor winter temperatures drop and the risk for carbon monoxide poisoning increases, Kentuckians are urged to be aware of the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning due to improper use of heating or cooking devices.

“Carbon monoxide poisoning can be deadly and should be taken seriously,” said Steve Davis, M.D., acting Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH) commissioner. “We urge Kentuckians to take steps to prevent exposure to carbon monoxide by avoiding the use of gasoline-powered stoves or charcoal grills as indoor sources of heat. It can be a matter of life or death.”

In 2010, there were 206 emergency room visits for Kentucky residents related to carbon monoxide exposures, he said.

Items such as kerosene or propane gas stoves and ovens have been used as alternative heat sources indoors, sometimes with tragic results. These devices emit a colorless, odorless gas, called carbon monoxide, as a by-product, and improper use can lead to severe cases of carbon monoxide poisoning. DPH advises Kentuckians to follow these steps taken from guidelines issued by the National Center for Environmental Health to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Install a battery-operated carbon monoxide detector in your home or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall for daylight saving time. If the detector sounds, leave your home immediately and call 911. On average, carbon monoxide detectors should be replaced about every five years.
- Don't use a generator, charcoal grill, camp stove or other gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside your home, basement or garage or outside near a window.
- Don't run a car or truck inside a garage attached to your house, even if you leave the door open.
- Don't use a fireplace that isn't properly vented. Don't heat your house with a gas oven.
- Be sure to carefully follow manufacturers' instructions for kerosene heaters, making sure the wick is set at the proper level and is clean. Ensure your kerosene heater is only operated in a well-vented area. Kerosene heaters require 1-K grade kerosene fuel and the fuel should be clear, not colored or cloudy. To avoid the risk of fire, place kerosene heaters several feet away from all furniture, curtains, paper, clothes, bedding and other combustible materials. Infants, small children and pets should be kept away from heaters to avoid serious burns.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning and are experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. Early symptoms include headache, nausea, vomiting and fatigue. Carbon monoxide poisoning is treatable.

If you are experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, call 911 or contact the Poison Control hot line at (800) 222-1222.

More information about carbon monoxide poisoning can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/co/guidelines.htm>.

### **HumanaVitality New Worksite Wellness Initiative**

HumanaVitality is part of the state's new worksite wellness initiative and replaces the Virgin HealthMiles program. HumanaVitality takes a fresh approach to wellness, creating a plan that's fun, engaging and rewarding. The program is free to all Kentucky Employees' Health Plan (KEHP) members who are at least 18 years of age. Members are automatically enrolled as of Jan. 1, 2012.

HumanaVitality is a wellness and incentives program that rewards members for taking steps to improve their health by doing things like going to the health club, participating in sports leagues and taking your health assessment.

Based on a health assessment, members can set health goals. When steps are taken to reach those goals, rewards are earned – everything from movie tickets, music downloads, hotel stays and electronics.

For more information or to get started, log in to [livingwell.ky.gov](http://livingwell.ky.gov) now. You'll begin to learn how to improve your overall health and well-being, and get rewarded as part of the process.

Questions about HumanaVitality or your HumanaVitality account can be directed to 1-877-KYSPiRiT.

### **Event Set for Women Veterans**

Join women veterans from across Kentucky in a meet and greet women veterans' event on Saturday, March 17. The event will be from noon to 4 p.m. in at the Wayside Hotel, 120 West Broadway. The event is sponsored by the Kentucky Women Veterans Program, a part of the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs.

The meet and greet will be an opportunity for all women veterans to find out about the organizations that support women veterans and to meet the people involved. In addition, women veterans will learn about resources available to them and their families. Most importantly, it's an opportunity to meet other women veterans, and join and expand support networks.

The mission of the Kentucky Women Veterans Program is to ensure that Kentucky's women veterans have equitable access to federal and state veterans' services and benefits, as well as create a strong network for women veterans in the state.

### **Employee Enrichment**

By Anya Armes Weber

The cold, gray days of winter can deplete our motivation. Lyndsay Swinton, a writer for Web site MFTROU.com (Management for the Rest of Us), suggests these five tips to recharge.

**Make clear goals.** Plan your next steps so you can arrange for the resources or help from coworkers you will need.

**Get experience.** Take advantage of training opportunities and talk to as many others in your field as you can. Learn what you are in for as your career progresses. Don't make the same mistakes colleagues made.

**Set limits.** Don't work beyond your capacity – always enlist help when you are in over your head. Try not to take work home with you often, and take the much-needed breaks you deserve every day. Making time for the good things in life – family, fun, friends – will recharge your work battery.

**Restrain your ambition.** Mishandled ambition will destroy your passion to be diligent. Worry less about who you want to impress and how you want to impress them.

**Challenge yourself.** Take the time to realize what skills you'd like to develop and what you can do to make that happen. You'll gain confidence that will translate both personally and professionally.