

## **ANATOMY FOR DISASTER IN THE HOME:**

My wife and I have been struggling with a host of symptoms over the past year. These include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Headaches
2. Nasal congestion
3. Significant coughing
4. Difficulty breathing with mouths closed
5. Constant fatigue
6. Drowsiness
7. Memory loss issues

In order to ascertain the source(s) of the problem(s), I have undergone a number of medical tests, including: Chest x-ray, CT scan, Pulmonary Function Test Sequence and Sleep Disorder testing. Some of these routines were more than a little unpleasant to have endured.

A daughter from the East Coast arrived for a ten-day visit on March 13<sup>th</sup>. She announced the following morning that she would not spend another night in this house as long as the air remained so unpleasant, as she acquired the headache and nasal congestion, plus fatigue, which we had experienced. We requested that our residential air be checked for quality that very day. It turned out that carbon monoxide (CO) was present at unsafe levels, so the furnace was shutdown immediately and most windows were opened to clear the air.

Nasal congestion disappeared right away for all of us, along with the headaches. Clearer thinking on all our parts became apparent with the arrival of a good, clean air supply.

Cracks and a hole were found in the gas furnace heat exchangers, allowing combustion by-products to be released into the air. Carbon Monoxide was potentially the most lethal gas escaping...not user-friendly to be sure! The furnace was replaced the following day – the soonest the move could be facilitated - without hesitation.

It should be noted that a commercially available CO monitor had been plugged into the AC outlet located nearest the furnace location. A local gas company representative said the monitor was indeed functional, but he could not determine why the alarm had not sounded during the dangerous conditions described above. This monitor samples for a CO concentration above 70ppm (parts per million) over a one to four hour period.

I urge every home owner to have home air quality checked, along with CO detectors for proper heating system operation. Fortunately, we survived; you might not.

Al Fulton

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