

# Pregnant and Sick From CO

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## Quick Facts:

- New owners of older home
- Furnace over 20 years old; expected equipment life ~15 years.
- Customer requested a tune up

*"I was sick but I realized that my baby on the way would be sick too, that's what convinced me."*



## Most Vulnerable Are the Young and Old.

It's a fact of life a pregnancy can make you feel sick but when our customer called us from Mountain View, CA to perform a tune up on her furnace, we found that there was another reason for her discomfort.

Not far into the tune up the technician used a scope to look into the heat exchanger. The heat exchanger carries heat and exhaust including carbon monoxide on one side of a metal divider and

the breathable air is on the other side. Since metal conducts heat well the heat alone is supposed to transfer or exchange with the other side leaving the fumes behind to be evacuated through the exhaust pipe.

In this customer's case there were holes and cracks in the heat exchanger allowing the exhaust to travel to the breathing side of the heat exchanger. There was enough CO to make her

more ill than a typical pregnancy. We initially shut down her furnace because of a health and safety concern and provided her, free of charge a couple of space heaters and a quote for replacement. She was skeptical until she spoke to her doctor, because she learned that the young and old are more susceptible and she wasn't feeling ill after the furnace was shut down she decided to go ahead and change out her furnace.

## Prevention is Key...

When combustion occurs the result is among other things carbon monoxide CO. It is present in fire places, while grilling with gas or charcoal, using an electric gas water heater, etc. it is odorless and colorless so people often have no idea that they are being exposed to it. There is an annual drive for CO safety every fall. Often, especially the first time the flue is left shut when using the fireplace causing a dangerous environment in

the home.

There are a few words of precaution about CO:

- Never bring an outdoor grill inside or in an enclosed area, like a garage or even a carport.
- Do not run the car for extended periods with the garage door closed.
- Get an annual safety appointment or tune up for your

furnace to assure it is in working order and the heat exchanger is in tact

- Install CO detectors as well as smoke detectors
- Never, ever allow anyone to bypass a safety, even if for a short time, to make your furnace work because it is cold out. This is very dangerous.

**Cold Craft**

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