

How much Carbon Monoxide (CO) is in your system?

_____ **parts per million (ppm) Your CO Test**

CO Test Scores

Type of Smoker

Some Possible Effects

Heavy Smoker	50 PPM	Urban "Air Pollution Emergency" Alert	
Moderate Smoker	40 PPM	Workplaces Closed as Unhealthy	
Light Smoker	30 PPM	Over time can lead to unhealthy hardening of the arteries and heart attacks.	
Nonsmoker or Ex-smoker	20 PPM	Slower Reaction Time Reduced Manual Dexterity Impaired Vision	
	10 PPM	Impaired Judgment of Time	
	0 PPM	Normal Environmental Levels	

Understanding Your Carbon Monoxide (CO) Test Score

Smokers UNDER 40 years old are at 5 times greater risk of heart attack than a nonsmoker. Smokers OVER 40 years old are at 2 times greater risk of heart attack than nonsmoker.

The normal level of CO for a non-smoker is 10 ppm or under. The level of CO for a smoker is usually much higher. A smokers' level of CO does not stay the same, but varies by the time of day, the brand and number of tobacco products smoked and how the smoke is inhaled. For example, right after smoking one cigarette, a smoker may have a CO concentration as high as 50 ppm. The good news is that after quitting smoking, the CO level will return to normal within one or two days.

* This is not a medical test. The information on the CO scale is intended for educational purposes. The health effects noted for each CO level have been observed in laboratory setting. The specific health effects reported in these studies may not apply to each person taking the CO test. For more information about how CO may affect you, talk with your doctor.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

About carbon monoxide

1. What is Carbon Monoxide?

CARBON MONOXIDE is a poisonous gas which is colorless, odorless and tasteless. The scientific symbol for carbon monoxide is CO.



2. What are the sources of Carbon Monoxide?

One of the most common sources of CO is tobacco smoke. CO is one of the most harmful substances in tobacco smoke. Levels of CO in the blood of smokers are 4-15 times higher than for non-smokers. CO may also be found indoors—in homes with gas stoves, gas hot water heaters, gas clothes dryers, gas furnaces and wood burning stoves if they are not vented right. Another common source of CO is car exhaust.

3. How does Carbon Monoxide Affect health and How is this important?



Carbon monoxide is harmful. When it is inhaled, it robs the body of oxygen that it needs. Reduced oxygen is especially harmful for the heart and brain. It can cause dizziness, headaches, nausea, drowsiness, and places a strain on the heart. Often the person gets out of breath when he runs and walks up stairs.

Over time it may lead to hardening of the arteries, a major cause of heart disease. Reduced oxygen can cause parts of the heart muscles to die and cause a heart attack. Older adults, the very young, and people with heart or lung diseases are hurt more by CO. In great amounts it can kill.

4. What can change these harmful effects?

If a person stops smoking, Carbon Monoxide leaves the body within 24 hours and oxygen levels will return to normal. As soon as the person gets back in shape, he can run and walk upstairs better. If the person stays quit it can add 7 years to your life.

There are lots of program to help people quit smoking
★ in the East Bay.

★ Call the American Lung Association to help you find a program 510-893-5474x375
or call CA Smokers' Helpline: 1-800-NO-BUTTS

5. How is Carbon Monoxide measured?



The Carbon Monoxide monitor measures the CO in your lungs. This tells you how much CO is in your blood-stream.