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# Homeowner News

News & Information For The Customers Of **Argent Heating and Cooling**

Autumn, 2008

## Another Year, Another 500+ Needless Deaths From CO Poisoning

Across North America, over 500 people die needlessly each year from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning in their homes. This could underestimate the problem. Researchers writing in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, estimate the number of deaths to exceed 2000.

These are not statistics. They are husbands, fathers, mothers, wives, sons, and daughters. They are families, like yours and mine.

Open your Internet browser and search for news stories about carbon monoxide poisoning. The number of stories is surprising. Fortunately, most stories do not result in the ultimate tragedy. While somewhere between 500 to more than 2000 people die from CO poisoning each year, as many 40,000 are admitted to an emergency room according to a study reported in the *Journal of Emergency Medicine*.

### Improper Venting

After a poorly vented water heater resulted in the evacuation of an Idaho Falls, Idaho apartment complex Fire Chief, Rick Taylor warned, "It's not something that you're aware of. You don't smell CO and your body takes it in more readily than it does oxygen."

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### Ghost in the Basement?

Low level CO exposure can result in strange visions, sound, anxiety, and sudden death. All of these have been associated with hauntings. In a 1921 medical journal article, a haunting was discovered to be the result of CO exposure from incomplete furnace combustion. In 2005, a woman was found delirious and hyperventilating after seeing a ghost in the shower. The ghost was the result of a poorly vented gas water heater.

# Raspberry Mustard!!!

Nothing speaks of Autumn like brats on the grill! Whether you're cooking for a tailgate party or simply want to try a different condiment for pork or fish, your own Raspberry Mustard will add a unique flavor and arouse the envy of your neighbors.

- 1/8 cup of yellow mustard seeds
- 1/8 cup of brown mustard seeds
- 3 teaspoons yellow mustard powder
- 1/4 cup cold water
- 1/4 cup white wine
- 1/3 cup raspberry vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 6 oz raspberries

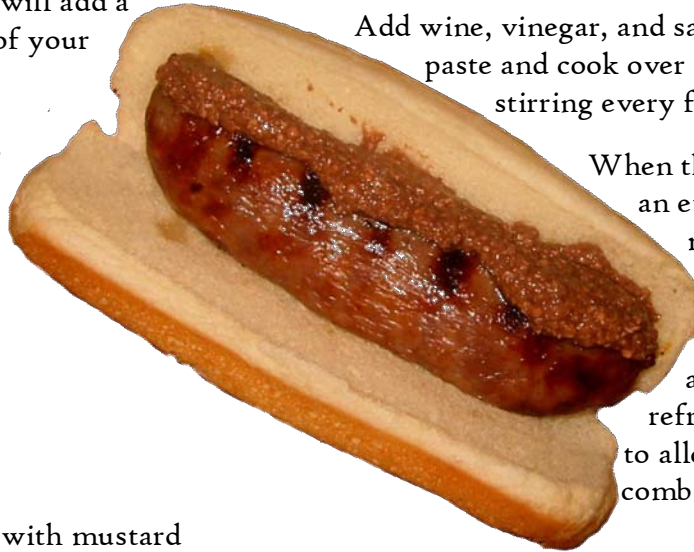
Wash the raspberries and combine with mustard

seeds, mustard powder, and water. Blend in a food processor until the mixture resembles a paste-like substance.

Add wine, vinegar, and salt to the mustard paste and cook over medium low heat, stirring every few minutes.

When the mixture attains an even consistency, remove from heat.

Place the mixture in a container with a lid and store in a refrigerator overnight to allow the flavors to combine and set.



## Mustard Trivia

- Mustard is a spice, second only to the peppercorn in usage.
- The entire mustard plant (seeds, leaves or greens, and flowers) is edible.
- Mustard seeds are not hot until they are cracked and mixed with water. The heat peaks in 15 minutes and declines rapidly unless retarded with an acidic agent.
- Brown and black mustard seeds are more potent, carrying their flavor to the sinuses, while white (yellow) seeds primarily affect the tongue.
- Mustard stimulates salivation, which increases appetites.
- Modest amounts of mustard will neutralize toxins, helping to prevent an upset stomach.
- The ancient Greeks considered mustard a medicine, not a food.
- Many varieties of mustard (e.g., Dijon, Bordeaux, Beaujolais) are made by mixing the mustard with specific types of grapes

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### Homeowner News

The Homeowner News is a quarterly publication of **Argent Heating and Cooling**. It is provided to our customers free of charge. We welcome your suggestions and ideas. Contact us at:

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# Don't Become a Carbon Monoxide Statistic

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Taylor noted that by the time people become aware of CO through headaches and nausea, they've already absorbed more CO than anyone would want.

"You want to have your stuff checked," advised Taylor. "If you haven't had your gas operated furnace and water heater checked in a number of years, call and have them checked by a professional to make sure you don't have any leaks."

We recommend annual checks.

## Are CO Leaks Common?

Fortunately leaks are not common. Still, furnace heat sections can crack over time. Flue pipes, which exhaust CO outside of your home can become pitted over time from corrosive condensation if not installed correctly. Flue pipes can also become disconnected.

A couple of years ago, Jason Saunders thought he was buying a smoke alarm for his California home. He bought a carbon monoxide detector by mistake. It saved his family.

The Saunders had recently had their air conditioning ducts cleaned to make the home healthier for their twin toddlers. The duct cleaning company disconnected the flue and did a poor job reconnecting it to the furnace. Carbon monoxide built up and seeped into the bedrooms. The CO detector sounded an alarm in the night.

The family was disoriented. Jason's mother-in-law called emergency services. Jason, his wife, the children, and his mother-in-law were rushed to the hospital.

The fire captain later noted that the carbon monoxide levels were 118 parts per million, more than three times the 35 parts per million level where firefighters were required to wear protective gear.

A few minutes later and the Saunders family would not have survived.

The lessons are to buy more than one carbon monoxide detector and only allow licensed contractors to work on combustion appliances. Many duct cleaning companies lack the licensing needed to install or service a furnace or water heater and lack the knowledge to work around combustion appliances safely as the Saunders discovered.

## Unlicensed Contracting Can Kill

Do not try to save money with unlicensed contractors. In Maine, eight people were sent to the hospital a few weeks ago when an unlicensed contractor improperly installed a new furnace.

Three of the eight people had to be treated in hyperbaric chambers. The treatment for one lasted nearly a week.

Since the contractor was unlicensed, he couldn't permit the job. Permitting would have led to an inspection,

which possibly could have uncovered the installation problem before people had to be hospitalized.

The consequence to the contractor was minimal. He nearly killed people, but was only required to pay a \$970 fine and plead guilty to a misdemeanor charge of "unlicensed practice."

## Backdrafting Risks

As air is exhausted from our homes through bathroom vents, dryers, kitchen range hoods, and fireplaces, it may depressurize the building, resulting in backdrafting. The pressure differential (sometimes aided by the wind) can overpower the ventilation system, pulling exhaust air down the vent pipes, into the home. This is a dangerous situation that can result in CO poisoning. Tight home construction has made this problem worse.

The best prevention is to install today's highest efficiency furnaces and water heaters, which feature power ventilation systems.

## Problems You Can Cause

Some CO poisoning results from consumer actions. When a Calgary, Alberta couple left the car running in an attached garage, it cost their lives. Eight rescue workers and the couple's son were sent to the hospital after showing signs of CO poisoning, after entering the home.

Do not leave a car running in a garage. Do not burn a gas light or stove inside your home. Do not run a generator inside your home.

**And please, install more than one CO detector, replacing the batteries annually!**


TIMING  
OF CO POISON

35 ppm.....	Headache + dizziness in 6-8 hours
100 ppm.....	Headache in 2-3 hours
400 ppm.....	Frontal headache in 1-2 hours
800 ppm.....	Dizziness + nausea < 1 hour
1600 ppm.....	Death < 2 hours

Prolonged, low level exposure will weaken the heart muscle, leading to a shortened lifespan

Wow! Free CO Detector

We want your family to be protected. Call us for an annual safety inspection and combustion adjustment, show us the receipt for a new CO detector, and we will take up to \$30 off the invoice!



# Win a \$200 Gift Card!

Complete and return for a chance to win a \$200 gift card. If you correctly answer the three questions below, we'll enter you in a drawing for a \$200 gift card. Second prize will be a \$100 gift card. All entries must be received by 11/30/2008. Mail to: [Argent Heating and Cooling, 501 Church St., NE, Vienna, VA 22180](#)

1. As many as \_\_\_\_\_ people die from CO poisoning each year.
2. After \_\_\_\_\_ hours of exposure to 35 ppm of CO, people experience headaches.
3. Every home should have more than one \_\_\_\_\_.

Please contact me about:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Power vented furnaces                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Improving indoor air quality                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fall safety inspection and tune-up    | <input type="checkbox"/> Solving comfort problems (e.g., hot spots and cold spots) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cutting utilities as much as 60%      | <input type="checkbox"/> Whole house generator                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reducing energy waste from duct leaks |  |

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Best Time: \_\_\_\_\_

No purchase necessary. A purchase will not improve your chances of winning. Entry must be received by 11/30/2008. Winner will be selected at random by 12/15/2008. All decisions are final. All entrants agree to contest rules, which require winner to sign a prize and publicity release unless precluded by law. Failure to comply results in disqualification. Entries void if incomplete or illegible. No responsibility is assumed for lost, late, or illegible entries. Company employees and family members are ineligible. Odds depend on the number of entries received. Acceptance of the prize implies consent to use name and image in promotional material with the prize as compensation. All taxes are the responsibility of the winner.



## The Corner

Q. What kind of mustard does a baby like?  
A. Poupon. \_\_\_\_\_

Q. Why did the chef lose his job?  
A. He couldn't cut the mustard. \_\_\_\_\_

Q. What do you call it when you eat the same mustard you had before?  
A. Dijon Vu. \_\_\_\_\_

Q. What did Mustard say when he was asked where his cousin was?  
A. Aw, he'll Turnip when he wants to. \_\_\_\_\_

Q. What made Mustard sad?  
A. His girlfriend had to leaf. \_\_\_\_\_

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## News • Specials • More Courtesy of Argent Heating and Cooling



Autumn Edition

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