

inSIGHTS

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Start a Garden this Spring

With spring weather approaching soon, consider making plans to start a garden at home. Keeping a garden at your home allows you to have a convenient source of fresh fruits and vegetables for you and your family. But gardening can also be a good source of physical activity, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The CDC considers gardening to be a moderate-intensity level activity and an easy way to be physically active every day. According to the CDC, two and a half hours of physical activity every week can reduce your risk for obesity, high blood pressure, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, depression and stroke.

The following are some simple tips to get your garden started.

- Start with a small space. You don't want to overwhelm yourself or produce more than you can use.
- Be realistic. Research what plant hardiness zone you live in so you can plant appropriate things.
- Don't do one activity each time you garden. Switch up your tasks so you don't get bored.

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Protect Yourself from Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a deadly, odorless, colorless, poisonous gas. Because it is impossible to see, taste or smell its toxic fumes, it is commonly considered the “silent killer.”

At lower levels of exposure, CO causes mild effects that are often mistaken for the flu such as headache, fatigue and nausea. At higher levels, the effects are more severe, such as vomiting, loss of muscular coordination and unconsciousness. High levels of CO exposure can be potentially fatal.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, you can protect yourself from the dangers of CO poisoning by doing the following:

- Be sure appliances are installed and operated according to the manufacturer’s instructions and your local building codes.
- Never service fuel-burning appliances yourself without the proper knowledge, skills and tools. Always refer to the owner’s manual for guidance, or contact a professional.
- Have your heating system (furnace, chimney and flue) professionally inspected and serviced annually to ensure proper operation.
- Never rely on gas ranges, ovens, gas grills or clothes dryers to heat your home.
- Operate grills outside of your home and garage.
- Never leave a car running in an attached garage, even if the garage door is open.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector on every level of your home.

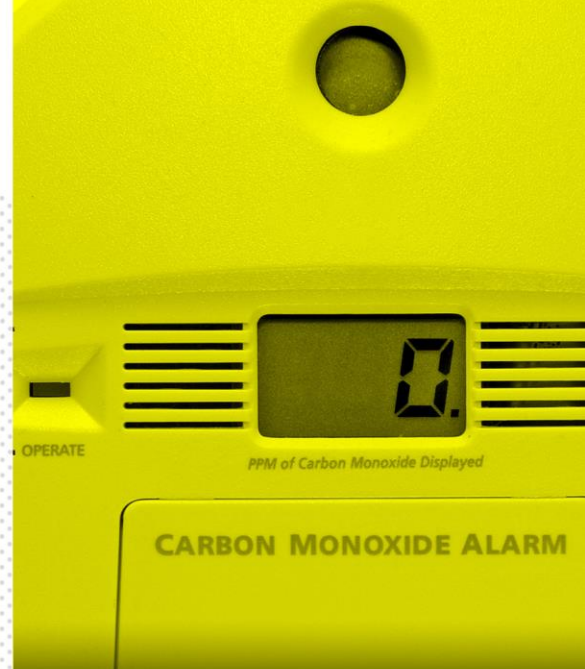
Car Seat Safety

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 3 out of every 4 car seats are used incorrectly. An incorrectly used or installed car seat can put a child in danger in the event of a car accident. Your first step to car seat safety is to find the right car seat.

Choosing a car seat for your child is not always easy. After you find one that is appropriate for your child’s age and size, you need to make sure that your car seat is compatible with your vehicle. The car seat manufacturer’s instructions should include this information.

Next, you need to make sure it is installed in your car correctly. Rear-facing, forward-facing and booster car seats all have different installation instructions depending on the seat size and type. This can be difficult to figure out, so your best bet is to have your car seat inspected by a certified technician, usually for free.

To find the nearest car seat inspection station near you, go to www.safercar.gov/cpsApp/cps/index.htm.



IN THE KNOW

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Carbon monoxide (CO) detectors are designed to detect the colorless, odorless gas in your home and alert you when it reaches life-threatening levels. But these detectors need to be properly installed and located in order to be the most effective.

A CO detector should be installed according to the manufacturer’s instructions; some recommend installing it near the ceiling while others advise installing it near the ground.

However, it is a universal recommendation to install one CO detector in the hallway outside of the bedrooms in each separate sleeping area of your home to ensure you will wake up if the alarm goes off. Additional detectors should be installed on each level of your home.

Avoid installing a CO detector directly above or beside fuel-burning appliances because these appliances may release a small amount of CO when you turn them on. You should also avoid installing a detector near heating vents or in a location where it can be covered by furniture or drapery. If the detector you choose is hard-wired or plug-in, be sure it has a battery backup in case your power goes out.