

Carbon Monoxide and Other Poisons

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that reduces oxygen levels in the blood. CO lessens night vision and hearing and is the same deadly gas found in auto exhaust. **Tobacco** smoke is full of dozens of other poisons, such as arsenic, barium, lithium, copper, lead and xanthine.

Oxygen/Carbon Monoxide Simulation

Purpose – To provide an analogy of how CO mixes easier in the bloodstream than oxygen.

Equipment

About ½ tsp. of coffee grounds

Food coloring (blue or green is best)

Eye dropper or small straw to pipette a drop of food coloring

Small, clear bottle with lid, 2/3 full of water

Procedure

Place the coffee grounds in the bottle of water and shake it up. The coffee colors the water very slowly. This represents oxygen in the blood. Now add one drop of food coloring to the same bottle. Note how quickly it colors the water. This represents CO as it enters the blood.

Key Points

CO is picked up in the blood 240 times faster than oxygen. The oxygen level drops when carbon monoxide is present.



