

# Propane Toxicity, Poisoning Symptoms, and How to Avoid Exposure

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## Inhaled Propane Toxicity

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Propane vapor is not toxic, but it is an asphyxiating gas. That means propane will displace the oxygen in your lungs, making it difficult or impossible to breathe if exposed to high concentrations. If you suspect you have inhaled a significant amount of propane, call 911. If you smell propane, or suspect a propane leak, call your propane supplier or 911 right away.

When people or animals come in contact with propane, it's usually in its gaseous state, making inhalation the most common form of exposure. Because it replaces the oxygen in your lungs, the symptoms of propane inhalation are related to oxygen deprivation, and not to any toxicity of propane itself. Physical activity will actually make the symptoms worse.

## Symptoms of Propane Inhalation

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The symptoms of propane exposure depend on how you were exposed. If you inhaled propane gas, your symptoms will be due to oxygen deprivation.

Symptoms include:

- Low Exposure
- Nausea.
- Dizziness.
- Headaches.
- Drowsiness.
- Coughing.
- Irregular heartbeat.

Significant Exposure

- Pain or numbness in limbs.
- Convulsions.
- Diarrhea.
- Rapid loss of consciousness.
- Asphyxiation.
- Heart Failure.

Liquid propane is also non-toxic, but liquid propane escaping from a container is extremely cold. The symptoms of direct contact with liquid propane can include:

- Irritated skin (numbness, itching).
- Frostbite (including blistering, tissue death, and infection).

## **How to Avoid Exposure to Propane**

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There are some easy ways to avoid exposure to propane. First, familiarize yourself with propane's unique smell, often compared to a skunk. This odor is actually added to propane, which in its natural state is odorless. If you smell propane in your home or workplace, evacuate immediately and call your propane supplier or 911. Next, consider installing propane and carbon monoxide detectors in your home or workplace. Finally, have your propane appliances and equipment and ventilation equipment inspected and serviced by a professional regularly to make sure it's in good working order.