



GPC HOME TIPS

WINTER 2009/10



Winter is here. The days have already started to get 'longer', so enjoy the snow while it lasts! This newsletter is dedicated to keeping you safe this winter, and hopefully can also provide you with some tips you can use for your well being in the months ahead.



SAFETY FIRST – WILL YOUR HOME MAKE YOU SICK?

Please read the account below very carefully. This recently happened to a friend of mine, and the following is her unedited account of what had been happening to her over the past few months that she kindly forwarded on. J, thanks for letting me use your story...

Flashback to 3 months ago:

I start feeling ill with dizzy spells and the feeling of coming down with the flu. A couple of weeks go by and I am still feeling this way. One day at work I became confused doing a routine task and decided I better see a doctor because something is just not right.

The doctor tells me it sounds like I have hypoglycemia and makes an appointment for me to meet with the dietician. After meeting with the dietician and following her advice a couple weeks go by and I still feel ill all the time. I go back and see my family doctor and I tell him I don't think I have hypoglycemia. I'm doing everything I should and eating every two hours but I am still sick. He decides he is going to test me for an insulin secreting tumor. The test is done and nobody bothers to call me about it. I call the clinic and they say the test came back normal. Now I have been left hanging.....still sick but nobody offering to do more tests. I decide to take matters into my own hands and go to a naturopath in Kitchener.

While driving there I have a dizzy spell and get pins and needles in my hands but manage to make it there okay. He told me that I had a parasite and food allergies and gave me some natural cures. I head for home hoping that I finally have the answer. On the way home I begin to feel very ill and get pins and needles in my hands and become very dizzy. The next thing I notice my fingers are starting to curl up and then my hands clenched tight and I could not open them. I pull the car over and call 911. The ambulance took me to Stratford emerg where I spent 8 hours having blood work and various tests done. The doctor then tells me that I was hyperventilating and that I should carry a brown paper bag around with me so next time this happens I can breathe into it. I insisted that I was not hyperventilating and went home very tired and frustrated.

As each day goes by I am becoming sicker and sicker and end up in St. Marys emerg. They check me over and say they can't find anything but insist on giving me a perscription for "mother's little helper" pills and say that I have anxiety. Again, I tell them, no, I don't have anxiety! Frustrated, I go home. In the meantime, they have me booked in for a CT scan and to see the urgent neurologist. The scan comes back normal and the neurologist says she can't find anything wrong with me. She suggests that maybe I have stress in my life. Another week goes by and by this time I am deathly ill. I am unable to do house work or cook meals and can barely make it through a few hours at work.

Sunday night I was sitting on my couch feeling very, very ill and happened to look over at the carbon monoxide detector on the wall in my living room. I see a number on it and decide to pull it off the wall and take it into my kitchen where I have a new gas fireplace. The number on the detector soared. I turned the fireplace off and went to the internet to look up the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning. Sure enough, EVERY symptom I had was listed. During this entire ordeal I told every doctor that I felt like I have the flu all the time, with dizzy spells and pins and

needles in my hands and face. The number one symptom from all the research I have done is "flu-like" symptoms, yet not one doctor picked up on it. The rest of my family were okay with the exception of my 6 year old who was complaining saying, "Mommy, I don't feel well".

I had two carbon monoxide detectors in my home and neither of them went off. One of them was in my kitchen where the fireplace is. It turns out you can't rely on them to go off for small amounts which over time can make you very, very ill. After having the fireplace tested, we now know that it had a leaky valve right from the day it was hooked up. Please take the time to check your carbon monoxide detectors. If you don't have one, get one! Make sure you have one with a digital number on it and not one that only makes noise. Thank God I listened to my Mother-in-law who kept bugging me to get a new one! I did and it happened to be one with a digital reading on it. That is the only thing that saved me and my family. I hate to think what would have happened if I didn't notice and we were home for two weeks over the Christmas break.

A carbon monoxide detector and smoke detector should be installed on every level of your home, and in close proximity to bedrooms. Test them regularly.



*** *Dust mites are microscopic bugs that can live on dead skin cells shed from humans and pets. Although they are harmless to most people, they can cause allergic reactions to some. A simple way to help control these little critters is to place mattresses, stuffed toys, cushions, etc. outside for 24 hours when the temperature is well below zero (as long as the fabric can handle the elements). The cold temperatures will help terminate the mites. Vacuum each item after bringing them back into the house and they should be fresher and healthier.*

*** *This is one I had to try recently. To get silly putty out of clothing, spray the area with rubbing alcohol and wipe away. Follow this by hand washing the clothing in dish soap and water.*

Questions about this issue of GPC Home Tips? Need a Home Inspector?

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