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Please do not restrict/diminish these rules. I am HIGHLY sensitive to NO₂ and get sick when this type of exhaust is near me. Headaches, chest aches...lasts for hours.
Eliminate as much air pollution as possible!!

It was the fall of 2021, and my little group of four had just gotten off the Colorado River after a trip rafting through the Grand Canyon. We were happy and a bit tired after a short drive back to civilization. We checked into our hotel, had lovely showers in our rooms, and without a lot of thought, opted for the Japanese restaurant downstairs for dinner.

It was one of those affairs with giant, group tables, each with its own cooktop where the chef comes and sautés right in front of you. Lots and frying pans and griddles. And flames from the gas range. Lots of dancing flames. It was very exciting and festive.

But after a while, I felt a malady descend upon my body. I couldn't think. I was dizzy. I felt ill. Really ill. The symptoms were very hard to describe beyond feeling like I was going to die. I excused myself from the table and fled to my room. I'd never left the dinner table due to illness in my sixty-five years.

A half hour later I was sitting in my bed, when my daughter came in with a plate of food. Surprisingly, I felt fine and gobbled it all up.

How peculiar! What was that? Whatever it was, it seemed to have passed, so I thought no more about it.

I returned home to Seattle and my daily scrambled eggs and stir fries on my gas cooktop. I started having severe headaches towards the end of the day, and then sometimes I would feel so sick I could only stare into space on the couch. Other than the headache, I couldn't identify specific symptoms, only that I felt terrible. I reached for one of the free Covid tests I'd been accumulating. Negative. This malady didn't descend every day but frequently enough that my Spanish-speaking housemate was appalled and concerned. Otro vez? he'd ask. Again? Over the course of a couple of years, I ran through more than a dozen COVID tests. Negative. Negative. Negative. What then could be wrong with me?

Last spring sometime my lungs began to hurt daily, and my voice was ragged and rough. I was practicing for a singing performance and was aware that my lower register was shot. And by mid-July the pain in the lungs had turned to a burning sensation. It was my constant companion. I blamed "smoke from wildfires in Canada" and routinely checked the air quality monitors. But, more often than not, the air quality was "good." I must be super sensitive, I thought. Wine eased the burning sensation.

In September, I took a short trip to California and, on my way out the door, grabbed the fall Sierra Club magazine. The entire magazine was devoted to the evils of natural gas. In one article, I read that one couple had ditched their gas cooktop because it gave the wife headaches. In another I read that gas cooktops emit nitrogen dioxide (NO₂)--which makes some people sick.

As long as the burner is flaming, the noxious chemical continues to be generated and released into the air. Where it lingers for hours! And can travel into rooms far from the kitchen! I read that the scientists who'd done the measurements were very surprised by these findings. And I read how NO₂ most often affects children and "people over 65." Hey, that was now me!

Suddenly the flames from the gas cooktop at the Japanese restaurant three years ago flickered into my memory. Ding ding ding!! The evidence fell into place. Surely, I had developed a sensitivity to NO₂ released by burning gas released by the cooktop in my own kitchen.

As soon as I got home from my little trip, I began the process of converting the cooktop from gas to electric induction.

A few electricians and installers later and the substitution was complete. Immediately the strange end-of-the-day malady of headaches and dizziness and distress stopped. The burning in the lungs subsided. The dull pain left behind has slowly receded as well. I can sing again.

Thank you, Sierra Club, for your magazine without which I might never have diagnosed the gas flames from my cooktop as the cause of my sicknesses. I am cured! And I am very grateful.