



Safety Begins at Home

...in the Kitchen

The kitchen is the center of activity for most households. Safety in the kitchen requires attention to several issues including: assuring that you have adequate lighting, accessible storage, appropriate use of appliances and equipment; practicing fire prevention habits; and preventing hot water or equipment burns.

Adequate Lighting

A well-lit kitchen is beneficial to people of all ages, but especially older adults. As people age, more light is needed to read labels and see sharp objects. The solution is not to add more overhead lighting, but to add lighting to the areas where food is prepared and cooked. Select light fixtures and bulbs that do not produce large amounts of glare. If a light bulb burns out, be sure to replace it immediately.

Providing Accessible and Appropriate Storage

Many potentially dangerous items are stored in the kitchen within reach of children and out of reach of the elderly. By moving things around and making a few small changes you can greatly reduce safety risks in the kitchen. Start by:

- ➔ Keeping knives in knife rack or drawer.
- ➔ Closing drawers and cupboards after items are removed from them.
- ➔ Storing chemicals in original containers out of reach of children.
- ➔ Posting emergency numbers, including the Poison Control Hotline number next to every phone in your home.
- ➔ Placing medications within reach of adults, but out of reach of children. Leave in the original containers.
- ➔ Storing everyday dishes and food items on lower shelves so there's no need to use a step stool. Shelves need to be within easy reach - not too low so bending down is required and not too high so a step stool or reaching overhead is required.
- ➔ Not leaving things scattered about on the countertops and in work areas.

A compact florescent light (CFL) will pay for itself in about 6 months. It uses 75% less energy and lasts about 10 times longer than an incandescent light bulb.



Using Appliances and Equipment Safely

- Stay in the kitchen while cooking on the stovetop. Turn off the heat on the stove if you must leave.
- Always cook oil or grease slowly, and watch carefully while it heats to avoid pan fire.
- When cooking, pan handles are turned away from other burners and the edge of the range.
- Hot pads (pot holders) are kept near the stove.
- Small appliances are unplugged when not in use.
- Flammable items such as dish towels, curtains, paper or plastic bags are at least 3 feet away from the stovetop and oven.
- Microwaves are operated only when there is food in them.
- A sturdy, stable stepladder or step stool is used rather than a chair to reach objects in overhead cabinets. Better yet, let someone help you with this task.
- When cooking, do not wear garments with long, loose sleeves.
- Avoid wearing slippers and open shoes when cooking.

Preventing Burns and Falls

- Use long oven mitts to prevent burns.
- Keep your water temperature at 120°F.
- Floor mats have non-skid backing.
- Test your smoke detector twice a year, when the time changes.



Cooking is the number one cause of home fires.

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