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'Tis The Season For Holiday Kitchen Safety Tips

It's the most wonderful time of the year — and also the most delicious. During the holidays, we serve up food that usually graces our tables only once a year, from pumpkin pie to eggnog to turkey with all the trimmings. Unfortunately, that extra time spent preparing your favorites in the kitchen can also create safety risks.

So, before you or your employees whip up a favorite recipe, share this refresher on the most common kitchen mishaps and how to prevent them.

Hazard: Burns

From a pot of boiling potatoes to cookie sheets hot from the oven, potential burn hazards abound during the holiday season.

Safety tips

- Cook on back burners whenever possible.
 - Turn pot handles toward the back to avoid accidental spills.
 - Use oven mitts every time you remove items from the stove or oven.
 - When you remove the lid from a hot pan, use the lid as a guard to direct the steam away from you in order to avoid steam burns.
 - Pour hot liquids slowly and carefully to avoid splashes.
- If you do get burned, run the burned area under cold water, dry it gently with a clean cloth, apply an antiseptic spray or ointment, and bandage it loosely. Seek treatment if the burn is larger than 2 to 3 inches; if it is on your face, hands, feet or a joint; or if fluid oozes from it.

Hazard: Fires

An average of 1,400 cooking fires occur on Thanksgiving Day alone, according to the [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#).

Safety tips

- Keep flammable items like potholders, towels, napkins, aprons and food packaging away from stove burners or open flames.
- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves.
- Plug cooking appliances directly into outlets, and never use an extension cord. Place a working fire extinguisher in the kitchen.

Hazard: Cuts

Knives make quick work of dicing veggies for savory meals, but they also can make quick work of your fingers if you're not careful.

Safety tips

- Place food on a flat surface (never your palm) before chopping.
- Curl your fingers under when chopping, which will leave your knuckles exposed rather than your fingertips.
- Exercise great caution with a dull knife, as it can slip more easily than a sharp one.
- If your knife slips and cuts you, clean the wound under cool running water, dry it gently with a clean cloth and bandage it. Seek treatment if the cut is deep, long or has jagged edges, or if you can't get the bleeding to stop with direct pressure.

Hazard: Slips and trips

[Commercial kitchens](#) use nonslip matting on their floors because even the most careful cook is bound to spill things when working around food and liquids. You may not have nonslip matting, but you can replicate its grip by always wearing shoes in the kitchen.

Safety tips

- Avoid open-toed or smooth-soled shoes in the kitchen.
- Clean up spills right away so that the floor is always clean and dry.
- Never run in the kitchen.
- Clear away clutter underfoot (kids and pets included!) to avoid trips.

Hazard: Food safety

Commercial kitchens adhere to specific food safety measures, and your home kitchen should do the same to prevent the spread of bacteria and other germs.

Safety tips

- Wash hands, utensils, counters and other surfaces often.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs separate from other ingredients, as they can easily spread bacteria.
- Cook all food to the appropriate temperature, which you can check by using a food thermometer.
- Refrigerate leftovers promptly to avoid the growth of bacteria that can cause food poisoning.

Mini-chef safety

No kid can resist the allure of holiday baking. If you have a little helper, focus on them in the kitchen. Stay within sight and reach of the child at all times.

Cuts and burns are particular concerns since kids' skin is thinner than adults'. Start the youngest kiddos on tasks such as assembling, measuring, pouring and mixing ingredients, gradually adding more involved jobs as they mature.

This holiday season, give yourself the gift of safety! Follow our basic tips to keep this time of year jolly and accident-free. And if you have questions about kitchen safety and more, get in touch with our safety consultants at safetyoncall@pinnacol.com.