



#36 GENERAL KITCHEN SAFETY



Information available from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission indicates more than 400,000 people were treated in hospitals for kitchen-related injuries during 2006. Typical injuries were cuts from knives and other sharp edges, burns from stoves, ovens, and hot pots and pans, contusions from inadvertently bumping or slipping and falling into appliances, cabinets, and counters, and strains from lifting or moving heavy appliances or other objects. General kitchen safety also includes taking precautions to prevent fires and utilizing proper food handling and preparation practices to prevent food poisoning or disease transmission.

Tips for Preventing Physical Injuries

- Always handle knives carefully and use them for their intended purposes. See Clover Safe #20 for further knife safety information.
- Clean up floor spills promptly to prevent slips and falls.
- Use oven mitts to handle heated dishes, pots, and pans. Keep hot objects away from counter edges.
- Do not use electric appliances near or in a sink, on wet counters, or with wet hands.
- Use your legs to lift heavy loads. Never attempt to lift or move a load that exceeds your strength capacity.

Tips for Preventing Kitchen Fires

- Have an ABC-rated fire extinguisher located in the kitchen and know how to use it.
- Keep combustible materials such as paper and cloth towels, napkins, recipe cards, clothing, and curtains away from stove burners.
- A prudent safety practice is to tie back long hair when using a stove.
- When lighting a gas stove burner, strike the match first and then slowly turn on the burner knob. If a gas stove pilot light goes out, turn off all the stove burners and wait for the gas to disperse before relighting the pilot light
- Never leave food cooking on a stove unattended.
- Do not overload any electrical outlet, including those located in kitchens.
- Always follow recipe time and temperature cooking instructions when using a stove, standard oven, or microwave oven.

Tips for Preventing Food Poisoning or Disease Transmission

- Always begin your food preparation activities by washing your hands with soap and water.
- Keep food either hot or cold. The temperature of a refrigerator should be 40°f or less.
- Wash fruits and vegetables before slicing, cutting, or processing.
- Clean counter tops and cutting boards prior to starting food preparation activities. Wash can tops before opening.
- After handling and preparing raw meat, wash the preparation surface and your hands with soap and water.
- Follow food recipes precisely and completely. Do not take food preparation short cuts.
- Discard food that is not fresh.
- Promptly refrigerate left over food. Heated food should be refrigerated within two hours of cooking.
- See the University of California Cooperative Extension brochure entitled "Make It Safe - Keep It Safe, FIGHT BAC! Keep Food Safe From Bacteria" for additional information about food preparation and handling safety. This brochure is available at county Cooperative Extension offices and online at: <http://ucce.ucdavis.edu/files/filelibrary/5810/42038.pdf>