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THANKSGIVING -- TIME FOR FAMILIES TO PRACTICE KITCHEN SAFETY

- **Unattended Cooking is leading Cause of Kitchen Fires**

Papillion, Nebraska - Thanksgiving is a time to give thanks, express gratitude, and enjoy a holiday meal with family and friends. It's also when there is almost three times the daily average number of cooking fires. In fact, cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and injuries in the United States.

Turkey, stuffing, pumpkin pie and all of the trimmings call for a lot of preparation and cooking. But, when family, friends, and especially children gather in the kitchen, it's very easy to get distracted and forget about what's on the stove. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of kitchen fires. Each year, there are approximately 102,408 emergency room visits due to a fire/burn related injury for children ages 0-14. Contact with a hot surface or flame causes the greatest number of burns in children.

Safe Kids Sarpy/Cass offers these safety tips to help you prevent a fire and keep the Thanksgiving holiday a memorable tradition.

Prevent Cooking Fires

- Never leave hot food or appliances unattended while cooking. If you are frying, grilling or broiling food stay in the kitchen. If you are baking, boiling, or simmering food, check food frequently.
- Always be alert when you are cooking. If you are under the influence of medication or alcohol, avoid using the stove or stovetop.
- Keep anything that can catch on fire at least 3 feet from the stove, toaster oven, or other heat source.
- Keep the stovetop, burners, and oven clean.
- Do not wear loose fitting clothes when you are cooking as they may catch fire from the stovetop.

Prevent burns and scalds

- To prevent hot food or liquid spills, use the stove's back burner and/or turn pot handles away from the stove's edge.
- Keep appliance cords coiled, away from the counter edges and out of children's reach, especially if the appliances contain hot foods or liquids.
- Use oven mitts or potholders when carrying hot food.
- Open hot containers from the microwave slowly and away from your face.



Department of Health & Wellness

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- Never use a wet oven mitt, as it presents a scald danger if the moisture in the mitt is heated.

Keep Your Kids Safe

- Create a 3 foot Kid Free Zone around the stove. Young children should be more than 3 feet from any place where there is hot food, drinks, pans or trays.
- Never hold a child while cooking, carrying or drinking hot foods or liquids.
- Hot foods and items should be kept from the edge of counters and tables.
- Do not use a tablecloth or placemat if very young children are in the home.
- When children are old enough, teach them to cook safely and always with help from an adult.

Safe Kids Sarpy Cass works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children ages 14 and under. Safe Kids Sarpy/Cass is a member of Safe Kids USA, a national network of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental injury. Safe Kids Sarpy/Cass is part of the Sarpy/Cass Dept of Health and Wellness.

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