

Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving is a time for gratitude, great food and quality time with loved ones. As you gather with your loved ones, it's crucial to remember that safety should be on the menu as well. Read the following tips to help you make this Thanksgiving as safe as it will be delicious.

1. Stay Safe While Cooking

The kitchen is the heart of your Thanksgiving, but it's also a common place for accidents. From 2017-2019, the average number of reported residential building fires on Thanksgiving Day was more than double the average number of fires in residential buildings on all other days. Cooking was the leading cause of all Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings. Cooking fires in residential buildings also occurred more often on Thanksgiving than any other day of the year.

Keep safety front and center and follow these guidelines when cooking:
Never leave your pan unattended.
Keep a fire extinguisher on hand.
Keep flammable items away from the stove.

Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove so no one can bump them or pull them over.

Keep a pan lid or baking sheet nearby so you can cover the pan if it catches on fire.

For additional tips, visit the U.S. Fire Administration's Cooking Fire Safety webpage.

There are many sources of potential accidental burns in the home, and they're not just caused by a fire. The National Institutes of Health reports that about a half-million people nationwide seek medical attention for burns every year. Visit Ready.gov for tips on preventing and treating minor burns.

2. Prevent Food Poisoning

When preparing food for family and friends, it's important to keep food fresh and safe to eat. By following food handling guidelines, you can prevent common causes of food poisoning.

Keep produce separate from meat, poultry, seafood and eggs in your shopping cart and in your grocery bags.

Store and serve food at the right temperature. Food should be stored below 40 degrees Fahrenheit and cooked to the proper internal temperature. Remember to refrigerate food within two hours of purchase of preparation and to always thaw food safely in the refrigerator, in a cold-water bath, or in the microwave.

Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before preparing or serving food.

Wash utensils, cutting boards and counters that have touched uncooked or undercooked meat, poultry, seafood, eggs or flour before using them on anything that will be served raw.

Visit Safe Food Handling | FDA to learn more about how to keep your family safe from food poisoning.

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3. Home Heating Safety

While we are in the midst of changing seasons and fluctuating temperatures, it's important to make sure your home heating system is in good working order. Heating fires remained the second leading cause of home fires in 2021 with an estimated 32,200 home heating fires reported across the country. Make sure your home heating system is inspected by a professional to ensure it is in proper working order.

If you're using wood stoves, fireplaces or space heaters, keep them at a safe distance from flammable materials and never leave them unattended. Maintain your heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected prior to use each year.

4. Travel Safety

If you're hitting the road for Thanksgiving, ensure you are well-prepared for what travels lay ahead. Make sure your car is in good working order for a road trip, pack an emergency preparedness kit and check the weather before departing. If you are traveling alone, be sure to share your travel plans with someone and take plenty of breaks throughout your journey to ensure you're fully rested and alert.

5. Holiday Online Shopping Safety

While Thanksgiving is a time to be with friends and family, it also heralds the holiday shopping season. While shopping for Black Friday deals, only visit reputable websites and don't click suspicious links or emails, including unverified merchants on social media.

Thanksgiving is a time for togetherness and ensuring safety is a crucial part of the celebration. By following these tips, you can have a wonderful Thanksgiving while keeping those you care about safe and secure.

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