



Watch What You Heat: National Burn Awareness Week is February 6 – 12, 2022

Burning Issues in the Kitchen...Watch What You Heat

by
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The smell of a cake baking in the oven or a tasty soup simmering on the stovetop is difficult for both children and adults to resist. However, cooking remains the number one cause of home fires in Michigan and across the United States.

That's why National Burn Awareness Week, observed the first full week in February, is a window of opportunity for organizations to mobilize burn, fire and life safety educators and unite in sharing a common burn awareness and prevention message in the community where you live.

"47% of all home fires are caused by cooking. Adults over 65 are at a much higher risk of injury or death from a kitchen fire due to physical, visual, hearing or mental impairments that may slow the quick action necessary in a fire emergency," according to Firefighter Michael McLeieer, president and founder of the non-profit fire safety charity [E.S.C.A.P.E. Inc.](http://www.escapeinc.org)

"Thinner skin of older adults burns faster and deeper," according to McLeieer.

Here are some tips to stay safe and prepared!

Plan A: Primary Prevention

- The best time to cook is when you are wide awake and not drowsy from medications or alcohol.
- Always wipe clean the stove, oven, and exhaust fan to prevent grease buildup.
- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Keep a pan lid and dry potholders or oven mitts near you EVERY time you cook.

- Turn pot or pan handles toward the back of the stove.
- When heating food in the microwave, use microwave-safe cookware that allows steam to escape.
- Allow food to rest before removing from the microwave.
- When frying, use a pan lid or splash guard to prevent grease splatter.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, boiling, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or broiling food, check it regularly. Remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you to check on your cooking.
- After cooking, check the kitchen to make sure all burners and other appliances are turned off.
- Never use the oven for storage.

Plan B: Secondary Prevention

If your food does catch on fire...

1. Cover the pan with its lid. A cookie sheet works too. Leave covered until the pan is cool. NEVER move the pot or carry it outside – the pot is too hot to handle and the contents may splash, causing a severe burn.
2. Turn the heat off. With the lid on and the heat off, the fire should quickly put itself out. NEVER use water to put out a kitchen fire. Water will cause the oil to splatter and spread the fire, or scald you as it vaporizes.
3. If the fire is inside the oven or microwave, keep the door shut and turn it off. Keep closed until the oven is cool.
4. If the fire gets out of control- get out, stay out and call 9-1-1. Don't return inside for any reason.

National Burn Awareness Week is the perfect time to share this information, develop a fire escape plan, check your smoke alarms, and make your kitchen and entire home safe for those you care for where you live! According to McLeieer, "preventing a burn injury is always better than the pain and trauma of medical treatment afterward. For more information visit ameriburn.org/prevention/burn-awareness-week.

** Information provided by E.S.C.A.P.E. Inc., the American Burn Association, United States Fire Administration and National Fire Protection Association.*