

# Kitchen Fun...Safely!

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## Fire Safety Tips

With the cooler fall weather comes the desire for warm “comfort” foods. Homemade soups, apple dumplings, warm cocoa, just to name a few. It’s fun to include the kids in food preparation...and tasting! But, caution must remain. So, a review of kitchen safety tips is in order to keep those little ones safe!

- Stay in the kitchen while something is cooking. If you must leave the kitchen, take a reminder—like a pot holder or wooden spoon— that you have food on the stove or in the oven. And, of course, take the little ones with you!
- Keep things that can burn, like paper towels, pot holders, etc. away from the cooking area.
- Keep handles of pots on the stove turned inward. Cook on back burners when possible.
- Create a 36-inch “NO ZONE” around the stove and oven. Teach children to stay out of that area when you are using the stove.
- Keep children’s toys out of the kitchen. When carrying hot foods, you could trip over toys in your path.
- Keep appliance cords away from the edge of the counter.



## Jack-o-Lantern Safety

Halloween is a great time for families to gather around the table to carve the pumpkin into any number of fun faces or designs. Just as supervision is of utmost importance when using sharp tools to create the design, lighting candles inside the pumpkin to illuminate the design must be handled with caution.

- Only adults should use matches or lighters to light the candle. Store the matches and lighters out of reach of children.
- The candle should be anchored securely inside the pumpkin. A small jar candle or a votive candle placed in a votive holder works well.
- Consider cutting the pumpkin open from the bottom instead of the top. It makes it easier to level the pumpkin, and the jack-o-lantern can be placed over a candle that is in a safe container.
- For light inside the pumpkin, consider gluing a small flashlight to the “lid” (the top of the pumpkin). Cut a small indentation the size of the flashlight, and then glue in the battery-operated flashlight.
- Electric window candles work well to illuminate a jack-o-lantern.



## Toasted Pumpkin Seeds

Now let’s have some fun with those pumpkin seeds! Enjoy a healthy snack while teaching your child safety tips in the kitchen. Clean out the pumpkin, rinsing the stringy pulp from the seeds. Dry the seeds with paper towels and toss 2 cups of seeds with 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil and salt to taste. Spread in a single layer on a baking sheet and bake at 325° for about 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. For a spicier snack, toss seeds with 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder and 2 teaspoons Worcestershire Sauce before baking. Pumpkin seeds, also known as “pepitas”, can be stored safely for several months in an air-tight container.



## “Cup of Soup” Warning

In a recent issue of “Journal of Burn Care and Research”, a study was conducted as a result of burn injuries reported from instant soup. Scald burns were most often reported when hot water was added to the cup to prepare the soup. Another cause of burns was the result of spilling the contents from the container of hot soup.



There are many shapes and sizes of containers for instant soups. The design of the container seems to have an affect on the chances of spilling. The safest containers were those that were shorter and had a squared bottom. Taller containers with narrow, round bottoms tipped over easily.

Removing the lid from prepared instant soup releases steam that can cause severe scald burns. It is very important that caution be taken when preparing and serving hot instant soups to young children. If the container is of the type that tips easily, it is safer to carefully pour the soup into a bowl or a soup mug with a large round flat bottom and serve warm...not hot.

Always test the temperature of the soup before serving it to a young child. If you are eating hot soup or serving hot soup to adults, keep children away from the table. Do not let them sit on your lap while you are eating.

## Kitchen Clean-up

Grease build-up on a stove or stove exhaust hood and in the oven can be a fire hazard. Clean stoves, hoods, ovens and surrounding areas regularly with a degreasing detergent. Some floor and furniture polishes, spot removers and oven cleaners are combustible liquids that can quickly catch fire. **READ THE LABEL** and follow precautions and instructions.



These detergents are poisonous to people and pets. Lock them out of reach!

## Common Kitchen Fires

- If there is an oven fire, leave the oven door closed and turn off the heat.
- If there is a fire in the microwave, close the door and turn it off.
- If a pan catches on fire, smother the flames with a lid or a flat cookie sheet. Never carry the burning pan outside or to the sink.
- If your sleeve catches on fire, cover the burning material with a potholder, mitt, or towel. Go to the sink and run cool water to put out the fire and cool the burn.
- If other parts of clothing are burning, drop and roll to put out the flames. Cool with water and seek medical attention.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in your kitchen and know how to use it!



## The Many Faces of a Jack-o-Lantern!



- Ask your child to count the jack-o-lanterns and then describe or write what they think each jack-o-lantern is feeling and why. Let them make up a story about the jack-o-lantern.
- Save the seeds from your pumpkin. Toast some of them for a healthy snack. Or, use some of the dried seeds to glue onto colored construction paper to make a design or a picture.
- Use the dried pumpkin seeds for a math lesson. Count out seeds. Take some away or add a few and count again!