



Keeping the Littlest Holiday Cooks Safe

Holiday baking is a wonderful activity that the whole family can enjoy. Rolling out the dough. Putting on the raisin buttons. Stealing a lick from the beaters. These are the moments that make the holidays special. It's important, however, to remember that the kitchen can be a very dangerous place filled with hot appliances, sharp knives and numerous electric cords. A few simple steps can keep the whole family cooking safely and happily.

1. Keep Things Clean

Keeping a clean working area ensures that accidents don't happen from clutter. This includes counter tops, sinks, stoves as well as floors. Don't underestimate how important it is to have room to safely move around. Clean hands and food contact surfaces are also important. Bacteria can easily be spread between cutting boards, knives, countertops and hands. Finally, be sure to wash kitchen towels after use instead of hanging them up – they can readily harbor bacteria.

2. Watch What's Going On

It's easy to get distracted while cooking, so be sure to stay aware of where your children are and what they are doing. Carefully watch any pots cooking on the stove as handles are a great temptation for little hands. Also, unattended cooking is the leading cause of kitchen fires – not faulty appliances, deep fryers or charred meatloaf. Keeping an eye on cooking food is by far the easiest, least expensive and most effective way to protect your home.

3. Unplug Appliances

Unplug any kitchen electrics or appliances when not in use. Accidental starts can be extremely dangerous and shocks may ensue if an appliance gets wet. Many appliances also use energy when plugged in whether they are turned on or not. Unplugging can save on your electric bill.

4. Prep Before You Cook

To reduce the number of trips to the pantry and cupboards, consider getting out all of your ingredients before you begin. This will ensure that you don't leave your children unwatched while you grab the flour. Accidents happen quickly in the kitchen. When cooking, also consider keeping a hot pad handy in case of an immediate need.

5. Check Cords

Look for signs of wear or damage to all cords as this could lead to shock or fire. Remember to remove the plug by reaching up and pulling it out of the socket rather than yanking on the cord. Cords should also not be placed underneath anything that is heavy nor should they be tacked to a wall to get them out of the way.

6. Separate Foods

When cooking, be sure to avoid cross-contamination between raw meat, poultry and seafood. Consider labeling cutting boards for each use and be sure to keep juices away from ready-to-eat foods.

7. Stay Cool

So many appliances in the kitchen use heat – the stove, the coffeemaker, the microwave. Remember that things can retain heat for longer periods of time than you might expect. Check for cool surfaces before allowing a child near.

Source: www.cdc.gov