

SAFETY IN THE KITCHEN



Accidents don't "just happen." They're caused by not knowing the safe way to work. The most common accidents in the kitchen include cuts, falls, electrical shock, burns, and poisoning.

Discover...

- ★ how to identify safety hazards in the kitchen.
- ★ how to prevent kitchen accidents.

Key Terms

flammable
poison control center

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What steps can you take to reduce the chance of accidents in the kitchen?



PREVENTING CUTS

Take care to avoid cuts from knives and other sharp objects.

- ◆ When you use a knife, place the food on a cutting board and cut away from your body. If the knife slips, you won't cut yourself.
- ◆ Don't cut toward other people. Don't point a knife or other sharp instruments toward others, even in fun. You could injure them.
- ◆ If a knife starts to fall, don't try to catch it. Get out of the way.

- ◆ Use a knife only for cutting food. Don't use it to open a can or tighten a screw. The knife could break and you could injure yourself.
- ◆ Wash knives separately from dishes. If you let them soak in soapy water, you can't see them and might cut yourself.
- ◆ To open cans, use a can opener that makes a smooth cut, not a jagged edge. Cut off the can top completely and throw it in the trash.
- ◆ Sweep up broken glass with a broom or brush. Never pick it up with your bare fingers. To pick up tiny pieces, use a wet paper towel.



When cutting, be sure to keep your fingers out of the way.

USING ELECTRICITY WISELY

If misused, electricity can give you a severe shock or burn. It can even kill you. Remember, water and electricity don't mix.

- ◆ Never use an electrical appliance if your hands are wet or if you're standing on a wet floor.
- ◆ Keep electrical cords away from the sink and range.



Water and electricity don't mix!

- ◆ Keep appliances in good condition. Never use an appliance with a damaged cord. It could cause a shock or start a fire.
- ◆ Hold the plug, not the cord, when you disconnect an appliance. If you tug on the cord, you may damage it.
- ◆ Don't run electrical cords under a rug. They could get damaged.
- ◆ If you can't get food out of an appliance, such as a toaster, first disconnect it. Then try turning the appliance upside down. If the food doesn't shake loose, take the appliance to a repair person. Never insert a fork or other object into the appliance. You could get a shock. Even if the appliance is disconnected, you could damage it.
- ◆ Don't plug too many appliances into one outlet. You could get a shock or start a fire.

PREVENTING BURNS AND FIRES

Hot food, steam, grease from cooking, hot appliances—these are just some of the kitchen hazards that can cause burns or fires.

- ◆ Wear close-fitting clothes. Roll up long sleeves when you cook. Tie long hair back.



- ◆ Keep **flammable** materials (those that burn easily) away from the range. This includes kitchen curtains, towels, paper, potholders, and plastic items. Some plastics burn very fast and give off thick, black smoke and poisonous gases.
- ◆ Use potholders or oven mitts to handle hot pans. Be sure they're dry—a damp potholder on a hot pan can cause a steam burn.
- ◆ Turn the handles of pans toward the center of the range. If handles are turned outward, someone may bump against them and knock a hot pan off the range.
- ◆ When you lift the cover from a hot pan, keep the front edge down as you lift the back of the cover up. This tilts the cover so the steam flows away from you and can't burn you.
- ◆ Wait until the range cools before you try to clean it.
- ◆ When you open a hot oven, stand to one side as you open the door.



- ◆ Before putting a pan in a hot oven, use a potholder to pull out the oven rack. Otherwise, you could burn yourself as you reach inside the oven. Pull out the rack again when you take the pan out.
- ◆ Keep aerosol cans away from heat sources. The cans may explode if heated, and their spray may be flammable.
- ◆ Learn how to use a fire extinguisher. Every kitchen, at school and at home, should have one.



Avoid reaching into a hot oven, but be careful not to pull the rack out too far.

GREASE FIRES

Fats and oils are very flammable. Keep equipment clean so grease doesn't build up. Watch cooking foods carefully. You must react quickly and correctly to stop a grease fire.

- ◆ **Don't** pour water on a grease fire. It will cause the grease to spatter and burn you.
- ◆ **Don't** try to carry the burning pan to the sink. You could spill burning grease on yourself or cause the fire to spread.
- ◆ **Do** turn off the heat immediately.
- ◆ **Do** pour salt or baking soda over the flames. This will cut off the oxygen and smother the fire. You can also put a cover on the pan or use a fire extinguisher.
- ◆ **Do** leave immediately if the fire seems out of control. Alert others in the building to get out. Call the fire department.



Cover the pan to smother grease fire flames.

PREVENTING FALLS

Most kitchen falls can be prevented with a few simple precautions.

- ◆ If you spill something on the floor, wipe it up right away.
- ◆ Use a ladder or stepstool to reach high shelves. A chair can tip over easily.
- ◆ If you have a rug in the kitchen, be sure it has a nonskid back.
- ◆ If the floor is wet, don't walk on it. Wait until it's dry.

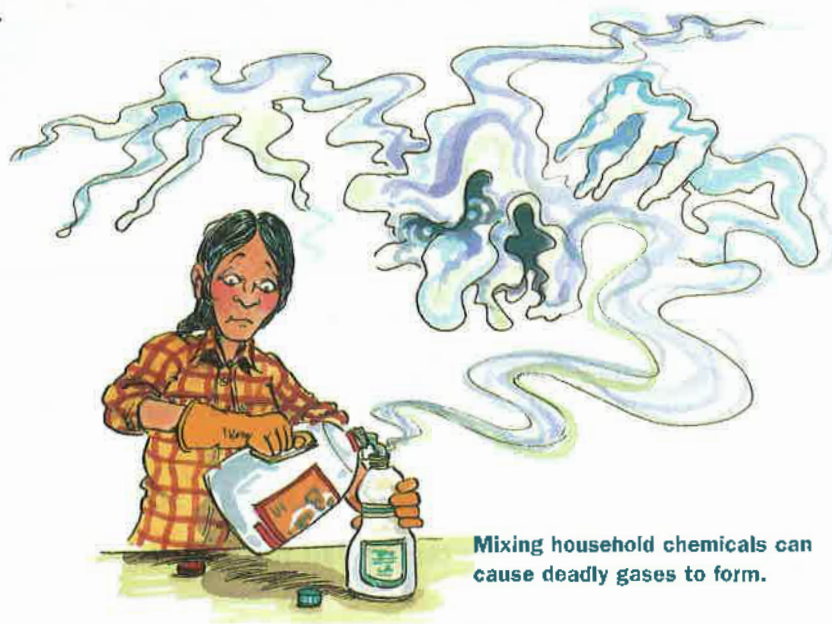
PREVENTING POISONING

Poisons can enter the body through . . .

- ◆ Drinking
- ◆ Eating
- ◆ Breathing
- ◆ The skin

Many household chemicals are poisonous. These include some products used for cleaning, pest control, personal care, medicine, gardening, and arts and crafts. Be alert for dangerous chemicals. Often you can accomplish the same task with safer products.

- ◆ Before you buy household chemicals, read the label directions carefully. If you're uncomfortable with the directions or product warnings, choose a safer product.
- ◆ Don't buy more than you need. Some chemicals change as they age and may become dangerous to use. Disposing of leftover hazardous household chemicals can be a problem.
- ◆ Follow label directions exactly. You may be told to wear rubber gloves or a mask to prevent skin contact. With pesticides—poisons that kill insects and other pests—you may need to cover or remove food, dishes, and cookware.
- ◆ If directions call for a well-ventilated area, open windows and use a fan. Otherwise, harmful fumes may build up.
- ◆ Never mix household cleaners together. Mixtures may release poisonous gases that could cause illness or death.
- ◆ Never point spray containers toward another person or inhale the spray yourself. Check which way the nozzle is facing before you spray.



Mixing household chemicals can cause deadly gases to form.

- ◆ Keep all household chemicals in their original containers. The labels tell how to use and store them and what to do in case of an accident.
- ◆ Never store chemicals in the same cabinet with food. The chemicals could spill into the food or someone could pick up the wrong container.
- ◆ If there are children in the household, buy products in childproof containers. Keep them in a locked cabinet.
- ◆ If someone is poisoned, call the nearest **poison control center** right away. It has a staff specially trained to deal with poison emergencies. You'll be asked what the poison is and about how much was taken or used. Have the container with you when you call.



Store chemicals away from food and out of children's reach. Before using any household chemical, read the label carefully.

CHAPTER 20 REVIEW

Understanding Key Ideas

1. Describe how to practice safety when slicing an onion.
2. What steps can help prevent damage to electrical appliances? Why is this important?
3. What two dangers are associated with wet kitchen floors?
4. Suppose you're about to use an oven cleaner. Identify two safety rules you should follow as you work.

Applying Knowledge and Skills

- ◆ **Demonstration:** Pretend you're cooking at the range, but do not turn the range on. Show how you would prepare to work, place hot pans on the cooktop and in the oven, and uncover hot pans. Then imagine a grease fire has started.

Show exactly what you would do and explain why.

- ◆ **Chemical Survey:** Survey the household chemicals in the foods lab or your home kitchen. What types of products did you find? Explain whether they are stored correctly. Read the labels carefully. What warnings and special instructions are given? In class, discuss whether the benefits of the products outweigh the hazards.

Exploring Further

- ◆ **Research:** Contact local or state agencies to find out how to dispose of dangerous chemicals safely and legally. Report your findings to the class and your family.