

Holiday safety

This time of year can bring plenty of fun and relaxation, but it can also lead unique safety hazards. Ease some of the challenges of the holidays and create a safety plan. Knowing potential risks will help you prepare for them, so learn how to prevent accidents and protect yourself and loved ones with the holiday safety tips below.

Travel

Travel might still prove difficult with pandemic-related restrictions, but if you decide to leave your home, it's important you do so safely.

- **Plan ahead.** Know your travel itinerary, pack in advance and look at the weather forecast. Flight delays and bad weather are out of your control, but having a backup plan will give you peace of mind.
- **Practice safe driving.** Winter roads make driving tricky. Prepare your vehicle for winter driving and keep an emergency kit handy. If you're driving long distance, know your route well and plan rest stops.
- **Prepare your home.** Knowing your home is safe lets you focus on the present moment. Consider using a security system or having a friend check on your house while you are away.

Cooking

To avoid burning the turkey or consuming undercooked food, establishing safe kitchen protocols can save you unnecessary stress. Whether you plan on cooking or someone else is, check out foodsafety.gov for a full food safety checklist.

- **Sanitize and clean.** Wash your hands often while cooking and encourage guests to do the same before eating. This prevents the spread of germs and keeps everyone healthy.
- **Prevent food poisoning.** You don't want to add a trip to the hospital into your holiday schedule. Keep raw meat away from other foods to avoid contamination. Double check the cooked temperature of meat and refrigerate leftovers in airtight containers.
- **Stay vigilant.** Did you know an average of 1,700 cooking fires occur on Thanksgiving each year? Don't leave food unattended and keep children away from the kitchen. Replace your smoke alarm batteries or keep a fire extinguisher in your kitchen for precautionary measures.

Gifts

The holidays can bring enough chaos. Don't let injuries from gifts and toys complicate your celebrations.

- **Follow safety information.** Read labels for warnings and keep an eye on toy recalls. Whether your gift is for a child or an adult, understanding the risks of a product can prevent mishaps.
- **Give age-appropriate toys.** Younger children can choke on small toy parts or injure themselves with dangerous electronics. Follow age guidance and supervise children around risky gifts.
- **Provide safety gear.** Buying a new bike? Don't forget to buy a helmet too.

The holiday toolkit



Celebrating

From bubbly champagne to roaring fireplaces, the excitement of holiday celebrations can quickly be dampened by safety issues. Prepare for the festivities by taking precautions ahead of time.

- **Watch the flames.** Both candles and fireplaces during can increase the risk of home fires. Never leave flames unattended, use a fireplace screen and keep fires away from flammable material such as drapes.
- **Decorate safely.** Climbing that eight-foot ladder to string lights is no easy task. Have a friend or family member close by to prevent falls.
- **Enjoy alcohol in moderation.** Having a clear mind helps you stay aware of your surroundings and prevent holiday mishaps. Enjoy a glass of champagne or two but understand your limits and stay hydrated in between drinks. Appoint a designated driver; never drink and drive.

Planning ahead to ensure everyone's safety during the holidays will help you relax, have fun and enjoy favorite activities.

However, if you find yourself stressed or feeling down during this busy time, don't hesitate to reach out to a mental health professional or your employee or member assistance program for support.

The holiday toolkit

