Many families gather in the kitchen to spend time together, but it can be one of the most hazardous rooms in the house if you do not practice safe cooking behaviors. Did you know that cooking fires are the number one cause of home fires and home injuries? By following a few safety tips you can prevent these fires.

**COOK WITH CAUTION**

- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly, remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you that you are cooking.
- Keep anything that can catch fire like oven mitts, pot holders, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains away from your stovetop.
- Never use aluminum foil or metal objects in a microwave. They can cause a fire and damage the oven.
- Keep a fire multi-purpose extinguisher in the kitchen and know how to operate it properly.
- Keep all portable and countertop appliances unplugged when not in use.
- Keep young children at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from any place where hot food is being prepared or carried.

**IF YOU HAVE A COOKING FIRE...**

- When in doubt just get out. As you evacuate close the door behind you to help contain the fire.
- Call University Police at (412) 268-2323 or 911.
- If you try to fight the fire, be sure others are getting out and you have a clear path to the exit.
- You should only attempt to fight the fire if...you have alerted others, the fire is small and contained, you are safe from the toxic smoke being emitted, you have an escape route identified and the fire must NOT be between you and the escape route.
- Follow your instincts, if you feel it is safe to use an extinguisher and you know how to operate it properly.
- In the case of an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed to prevent flames from burning you or your clothing.

**NEVER POUR WATER ON A GREASE FIRE**

- Water can make a grease fire spread, putting you and others in greater danger.
- Keep a metal lid nearby when you’re cooking to smother small grease fires. Smother the fire by sliding the metal lid over the pan or pot and turn off the stovetop heat source. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
- If you do not have a metal lid for the pot/pan you are using than use a metal cooking or baking sheet.

**FACTS**

- The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
- Most cooking fire in the home involve the stovetop.
- The leading type of material ignited in cooking fire is food, especially oils, fats and greases.
- **COOKING FIRES ARE PREVENTABLE!**