**AAP NEWS PARENT PLUS**

**INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN**

**Cook up a recipe for safety in your kitchen**

Letting children help you cook can be a great educational opportunity and a fun way to bond. But when a hot stove, scalding water or sharp knives are involved, things can get dicey. Therefore, it’s important to minimize the hazards found in your kitchen.

Scalds and thermal burns are among the most common childhood injuries, with scalds approximately twice as common as burns, according to a study in the June 2007 issue of *Pediatrics*, the journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP). The most common scenario is when a child pulls a pot of hot water off the stove or spills a container of hot water.

The recent death of a 5-year-old after he sustained extensive burns when his bike crashed into a turkey fryer full of boiling cooking oil illustrates the dangers of hot liquids.

Other kitchen hazards include unsanitary food preparation and choking.

The AAP and The Nemours Foundation’s KidsHealth Web site (www.kidshealth.org) offer the following tips to keep kids safe in the kitchen:

**General safety**

- Always supervise your child in the kitchen.
- Keep the kitchen organized and clean to avoid tripping and other accidents.

**Food safety**

- Always thaw meat in the refrigerator, not on the countertop where children could reach it.
- Don’t leave anything that needs refrigeration at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Teach children to wash their hands frequently when cooking.

**Heat safety**

- Don’t let children play near the stove. Put them in a high chair or gate them out of the kitchen when the oven is on.
- Don’t let kids wear baggy clothing while cooking, since these items can be fire hazards.
- If you can’t leave your hand on a surface for more than 10 seconds, the heat could be dangerous for a child.
- Keep hot liquids and foods away from the edges of tables, place hot pots and pans on back burners, and keep handles facing in so kids can’t grab them.
- Don’t allow children to touch the inside of the oven door when you open it to remove something that was baking inside.
- Consider using an oven door guard to prevent a child’s hands from touching the hot oven door.

— Allison Bond

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