



THE ART OF COOKING WITH KIDS

Tips for Keeping Kids Safe

Your kitchen might not be a construction zone, but it can still be a dangerous place for young children. Beyond always carefully supervising kids while they're in the kitchen, educating them on kitchen and food safety is also important. Here are some tips for keeping your little ones safe:

Food Hygiene Safety:

Maintaining proper food hygiene safety standards in the kitchen should be an integral part of food preparation lessons with children. A few simple tips for staying clean keep food safe and families healthy.

- Take off all jewelry from hands and wrists. If food gets on a ring or a bracelet, harmful bacteria can spread.
- Clean hands help to prevent food from becoming contaminated with harmful bacteria. When children enter the kitchen, the first thing they should be taught to do is wash their hands thoroughly with warm water and soap, for approximately 15 seconds. Children should be prompted to wash their hands frequently, especially after sneezing, coughing, eating, scratching, or touching raw meat.
- When handling raw meat, hands and equipment should be washed immediately to prevent cross-contamination. Vegetables and other materials should not come into contact with equipment that has been contaminated by raw meat.

Knife Safety:

It is extremely important to understand how to use and handle a knife in the kitchen. With these knife safety tips, injuries can be avoided.

- When using a knife, children need to be aware of their hands and fingers at all times. Teach them the bear claw technique, where one curls their fingers like a claw and places on top of the food being cut, keeping the food item steady and small fingers tucked away from the knife blade.
- Seemingly innocent utensils like plastic or butter knives can become dangerous weapons in the hands of an unwary child, so be sure there is an adult supervisor in the kitchen at all times.
- Knives should not be placed in sinks full of soapy water, as sink water tends to become very cloudy. Knives should instead be visible throughout the cooking and washing process.
- Consider equipping your child with an enclosed manual chopper rather than a knife. The chopper makes the job safer, cleaner and, in most cases, faster and easier.
- To be safest, children under the age of seven should avoid the use of sharp knives.

Other Appliances:

- When it comes to ovens and stove tops, make sure that pot handles are turned toward the back of the stove to prevent children from grabbing a hot handle or pulling a pot and its hot contents onto themselves. Also, if your oven door gets hot on the outside, make sure children stay away to avoid burning themselves by accidentally leaning or rubbing up against it.
- When using a microwave, supervise your child and make sure that he or she is tall enough to remove food from the microwave without it ever being at face level, as facial burns can otherwise occur. Always use potholders to remove food from a microwave.



Other Appliances Cont'd:

- Turn off stoves and appliances immediately when you're finished using them, and unplug any electrical appliances when they are not in use. Never plug in appliances with wet hands.
- Teach your kids to clean up properly after cooking. Wipe appliance and surfaces immediately after spills and clean stove surfaces and ovens regularly. Remember that built-up grease can catch fire easily.

General Safety Information:

- Before entering the kitchen, ask your child to identify all the dangers in the kitchen. What is sharp? What is hot? Once you feel that all of the dangers have been clearly defined, set the rules. The child should know never to begin a project in the kitchen without your approval and supervision.
- Have children stand at the level of the activity. Use a stool if necessary.
- Don't sample uncooked products made with raw eggs. Yes, this means cookie dough! Raw eggs are a primary source of salmonella, a dangerous type of food poisoning. Instead, let them be your "official tasters" once the project is completed.
- Always wear shoes in the kitchen. If you're barefoot, you risk getting burned with hot mixtures or cut with knives or forks.
- Never answer the phone when something is cooking. Let the answering machine pick up and call back when you are done. Besides, this should be time to focus on your child as well!