

TerranearPMC Safety Share

Week of October 28, 2013 – Holiday Health and Safety Tips

Halloween just crept up on us in a blink of an eye. Next is Thanksgiving and right after we see Santa at the end of the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade in New York City, the Christmas season officially begins (even though all the retailers think that happens on Labor Day!). And while the holidays are a time to celebrate, and give thanks, and to reflect on our lives, they are also a time to pay special attention to our safety and health as well as the safety and health of friends and family. Below are a few things that we need to keep in mind so that this great time of the year remains wonderful.

Wash your hands often. Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. Wash your hands with soap and clean running water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based product.

Stay warm. Cold temperatures can cause serious health problems, especially in infants and older adults. Stay dry, and dress warmly in several layers of loose-fitting, tightly woven clothing. Check on children, the elderly and pets.

Manage stress. The holidays don't need to take a toll on your health. Keep a check on over-commitment and over-spending. Balance work, home, and play. Get support from family and friends. Keep a relaxed and positive outlook. Get enough sleep.

Travel safely. Whether you're traveling across town or around the world, help ensure your trip is safe. Don't drink and drive, and don't let someone else drink and drive. Wear a seat belt every time you drive or ride in a motor vehicle. Always buckle your child in the car using a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt according to his/her height, weight, and age. Get vaccinations if traveling out of the country.

Prevent injuries. Injuries from falls and fireworks often occur around the holidays. Use step stools instead of furniture when hanging decorations. Leave the fireworks to the professionals. Most residential fires occur during the winter months. Keep candles away from children, pets, walkways, trees, and curtains. Never leave fireplaces, stoves, or candles unattended. Don't use generators, grills, or other gasoline- or charcoal-burning devices inside your home or garage. Install a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector in your home. Test and change the batteries regularly.

Other things to remember as far as cooking safety goes:

- Put a lid on a grease fire to smother it, then turn off the heat. Baking soda will also work.
- Never move a burning pan. You can be badly burned or spread the fire.
- Never throw water or use a fire extinguisher on a grease fire. Water will only spread the fire and the force of the extinguisher can splash flaming grease out of the pan.

- Stand by your pan. Don't leave food, grease or oils cooking on the stovetop unattended.
- Wear short or tight fitting sleeves when cooking. Loose fitting clothing can easily catch fire.
- If your clothing catches fire, STOP, DROP & ROLL to put out the flames. Put burns in cool running water. Call 9-1-1 for help.
- Keep pot handles turned inward to prevent accidental spills of hot contents.
- Create a three-foot "child-free zone" around the stove. Keep children and pets away from the stove while cooking to prevent burns and scalds.

Handle and prepare food safely. As you prepare holiday meals, keep you and your family safe from food-related illness. Wash hands and surfaces often. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs (including their juices) away from ready-to-eat foods and eating surfaces. Cook foods to the proper temperature. Refrigerate promptly. Do not leave perishable foods out for more than two hours.

Eat healthy, and be active. With balance and moderation, you can enjoy the holidays the healthy way. Choose more vegetables and fruit. Select just one or two of your favorites from the host of tempting foods. Find fun ways to stay active, such as dancing to your favorite holiday music. Be active for at least 2½ hours a week. Help kids and teens be active for at least 1 hour a day.

Be smoke-free. Avoid smoking and breathing other people's smoke. If you smoke, quit today! Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW, or talk to your health care provider for help.

Get check-ups and vaccinations. Exams and screenings can help find problems early or before they start. Vaccinations help prevent diseases and save lives. Schedule a visit with your health care provider for a yearly exam. Ask what vaccinations and tests you should get based on your age, lifestyle, travel plans, medical history, and family health history.

Watch the kids. Children are at high risk for injuries. Keep a watchful eye on your kids. Keep potentially dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items, choking hazards (like coins and hard candy), and other objects out of kids' reach. Learn how to provide early treatment for children who are choking. Develop and reinforce rules about acceptable and safe behaviors for all electronic media.

If you plan to celebrate Christmas with a natural tree, keep the tree watered! Christmas trees account for hundreds of fires annually. Typically, shorts in electrical lights or open flames from candles, lighters or matches start tree fires. Well-watered trees are not a problem. A dry and neglected tree can be.

**Reflect upon your present blessings of which every man has many -
not on your past misfortunes, of which all men have some.**

Charles Dickens