

## Loyola trauma, burn surgeon gives tips to safely prepare holiday bird

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Aficionados agree that deep-frying a turkey is the best way to prepare the most flavorful and moist version of the traditional centerpiece of the Thanksgiving meal.

However, if you choose to go the deep-frying route, you have to be careful that the bird is not the only thing that gets fried on [Thanksgiving](#) Day. In the [United States](#), more than 141 serious fires and hot-oil burns have been reported from the use of turkey fryers over the last decade, according to the U.S. [Consumer Product Safety Commission](#).

“If a turkey fryer is used the way it’s supposed to be used by people who are not impaired by alcohol or drugs, I think they’re fine,” said Dr. Thomas Esposito, chief of the Division of Trauma, Surgical Critical Care and Burns in the Department of Surgery, Loyola University Chicago Stritch School of Medicine. “Injuries from turkey fryers are rare, but when they happen to you or a family member, that doesn’t matter – they are very devastating.”

If you’re planning to use a turkey fryer, Esposito said safety tips to heed include:

- \* Keep the fryer in full view while the burner is on.
- \* Keep children and pets away from the cooking area.

- \* Place the fryer in an open area away from all walls, fences or other structures.
- \* Never use in, on, or under a garage, breezeway, carport, porch, deck or any other structure that can catch fire.
- \* Slowly raise and lower the turkey to reduce hot-oil splatter and avoid burns.
- \* Never cook in short sleeves, shorts or bare feet. Cover all bare skin when dunking or removing bird.
- \* Protect your eyes with goggles or glasses.
- \* Immediately turn off fryer if the oil begins to smoke.
- \* Make sure the turkey is completely thawed and be careful with marinades. Oil and water don't mix and water can cause oil to spill over, creating a fire or even an explosion.
- \* Don't overfill fryer with oil. Turkey fryers can ignite in seconds after oil hits the burner.
- \* Keep a fire extinguisher appropriate for oil fires close at hand and be familiar with how to operate it.
- \* Do not use a hose in attempts to douse a turkey fryer fire.
- \* If you do burn yourself, or someone else is burned, seek immediate medical attention.

Taking care to not become a victim of a fire and serious burns applies equally inside the home on Thanksgiving Day, the leading day for

cooking fires, with three times as many as on an average day, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

“It doesn’t matter if it is a turkey fryer or a conventional oven, you should always take great care when using appliances, vehicles and any other device that has the potential to cause great harm to yourself and others if used in a careless, irresponsible manner,” Esposito said.

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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