

Don't let burns mar your holidays

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Use care in the kitchen, around the tree, experts say.

(HealthDay)—The risk of burns from fires and cooking accidents increases during the holidays, so you need to be extra cautious, an expert says.

"Between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, we see a significant increase in patients coming in with burns," said Dr. Steven Sandoval, medical director at the Suffolk County Volunteer Firefighters Burn Center of Stony Brook University Hospital in New York.

"Holiday celebrations should be full of joy, but if not careful, could quickly turn tragic," Sandoval said in a university news release.

Cooking accidents are a major cause of burns at this time of year.

"People aren't used to cooking such large meals on a regular basis," Sandoval said. "Scalding is one of the number one burn injuries patients come in with; from large pots filled with boiling water, to boiling hot juices spilling out of meat pans, people need to take extra precautions in the kitchen."

Be careful when taking large dishes out of the oven. They are heavy and can spill over and cause burns to the hands, forearms and other parts of the body, he noted. Keep pot holders, wooden utensils, towels and food packaging away from the stovetop.

If you have a [turkey fryer](#), use it outdoors only and keep it a safe distance from homes and other structures. Do not overfill it with oil and never leave it unattended, Sandoval said.

Christmas trees are a common cause of fires during the holidays. If you buy a live tree, make sure it's fresh, place it away from fireplaces and radiators, and keep the stand filled with water. If you have an artificial tree, make sure it is fire resistant.

Never burn wrapping paper in the fireplace, because it can ignite suddenly and [burn](#) intensely, Sandoval added. Place candles away from trees and other decorations and out of reach of children and pets. Don't leave candles unattended.

Be sure your smoke detector is working and have a fire extinguisher in the home, Sandoval said.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [holiday health and safety](#).

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