

Keeping T-day kitchens safe for the whole family

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The whole family—even the youngest members—can take part in

Thanksgiving's hours of food preparation by following some safety tips.

The [nation](#)'s leading pediatrics organization offers some holiday advice for families with young children.

"There's a lot of excitement and joy surrounding meal preparation at this time of year, but it also can be stressful," said Dr. Dina DiMaggio, a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

"Consider how to involve kids in the process and think about assigning an adult to keep track of the youngest when the kitchen is at full capacity. By planning in advance, families can help ensure the day goes smoothly for all," she said in an academy news release.

Here are some helpful tips:

- Start by showing kids how to stay safe while cooking by teaching them to hold [kitchen](#) tools safely, DiMaggio suggests. You can do this with specific child-safe knives.
- Show them how oven mitts can protect hands from heat, as well as how to turn appliances on and off safely. Tell them about the importance of keeping flammable objects away from the open flames.
- Still, always supervise children when cooking to be sure they're following the rules.
- Follow food safety guidelines, including washing raw vegetables and fruits, and cooking food thoroughly. Ensure the little ones also wash their hands thoroughly after touching raw foods. Model good behavior by washing your own hands frequently.
- Make sure a food doesn't include raw eggs or other ingredients that should be cooked before offering your little helper a taste. Wash the spoon before it goes back into the food.
- Store raw foods in the fridge separately from cooked foods to

prevent bacteria from spreading, the AAP suggests. Always thaw meat in the refrigerator, never on the countertop.

- Keep everyone safe from burns by placing hot [food](#) and liquid far from the edges of counters and tables. Make sure [young children](#) cannot reach microwave ovens. Turn pot handles toward the side or back of the stove.
- Find your child before walking with hot liquid, to be sure you don't trip and harm both of you. Don't drink hot liquids while your child is on your lap, the AAP recommends.
- Foods requiring refrigeration should not be left at [room temperature](#) for more than two hours.
- Clean up immediately after the meal to avoid an accident in which a child could find a choking hazard or come into contact with alcohol or tobacco.

More information: Foodsafety.gov offers other [Thanksgiving safety tips](#).

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