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PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Remember Kitchen Safety for the Holiday Season

PINELLAS COUNTY – As the holiday season approaches, the Pinellas County Health Department and Safe Kids Worldwide recommend that you check the kitchen for preventable hazards and supervise children at all times in the kitchen. It's important to have locks on any cabinets a small child can reach, to keep the cabinets closed and locked, and to store hazardous substances out of reach.

But that's not enough. The most important safety precaution in the kitchen is constant, close, attentive supervision. Simply being in the same room as a child is not necessarily supervising. An actively supervised child is in sight and in reach at all times.

Burns — from spills, steam, hot surfaces and flame — can be especially devastating injuries. Because young children have thinner skin than adults, they burn more severely and at lower temperatures. Scald burns from hot liquid or steam are the most common type of burns among children ages four and under. A child will suffer a full-thickness burn (third-degree burn) after just three seconds of exposure to 140-degree water, and will need surgery and skin grafts.

The Pinellas County Health Department and Safe Kids recommend these precautions against kitchen burns: Never leave a hot stove unattended. (Unattended food on the stove is the number one cause of home fires.)

- Never hold a child while cooking or carrying hot items.
- Cook on back burners whenever possible, and turn all handles toward the back of the stove.
- Don't allow loose-fitting clothing in the kitchen.
- Keep hot foods and liquids away from the edges of counters and tables.
- Be especially careful around tablecloths — children can pull hot dishes down onto themselves.

Children who can follow directions may be ready to help out in the kitchen with tasks that do not involve knives, appliances or heat. Don't give children knives or let them handle anything hot until they have shown the maturity and coordination to do it safely. Some children mature faster than others, so it's up to parents to use good judgment about a child's capabilities.

Visit www.usasafekids.org for more information about kitchen safety and burn prevention.

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The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.
www.PinellasHealth.com