

# Thanksgiving Day Brings More Home Cooking Fires Than Any Other Day

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ST. LOUIS — As Thanksgiving approaches, it's a time to prepare the holiday feast and brush up on home fire safety. Plus, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect communities, planning your celebrations may be a little different this year.

“Home fires are a real threat over the Thanksgiving holiday,” said Beth Elders, Executive Director, Greater St. Louis, American Red Cross. “In particular, cooking fires

are the number one cause of home fires and year after year Thanksgiving is the peak day for these tragedies. We at the Red Cross are urging families to follow cooking safety steps to help prevent your holiday celebrations from going up in smoke.”

To help keep you and your loved ones safe this Thanksgiving, the American Red Cross offers these safety tips:

1. Keep an eye on what you fry. Never leave cooking food unattended. If you must leave the kitchen, even for a short period of time, turn off the stove.
2. Move items that can burn away from the stove. This includes dishtowels, bags, boxes, paper and curtains. Also keep children and pets at least three feet away.
3. Avoid wearing loose clothing or dangling sleeves while cooking.
4. When frying food, turn the burner off if you see smoke or if the grease starts to boil. Carefully remove the pan from the burner.
5. Keep a pan lid or a cookie sheet nearby. Use it to cover the pan if it catches on fire. This will put out the fire. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cooled.
6. Turn pot handles to the back of the stove, so no one bumps them or pulls them over.
7. Use a timer to remind yourself that the stove or oven is on. Check the kitchen before going to bed or leaving home to ensure all stoves, ovens and small appliances are turned off.
8. Celebrating with the people you live with is the safest choice. If you do celebrate with people who don't live with you, gatherings and activities held outdoors are safer than indoor gatherings.
9. Do not attend or host a holiday gathering if you are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19.
10. If you are not fully vaccinated and must travel, follow CDC's [Domestic Travel](#) or [International Travel](#) recommendations for unvaccinated people. Everyone, even people who are fully vaccinated, will still be [required to wear a mask](#) on public transportation.

You can also help keep your family safe by testing your smoke alarms monthly and practicing your home fire escape plan until everyone can get out in less than **two minutes** — the amount of time you may have to get out of a burning home before it's too late.

Visit [redcross.org/fire](https://www.redcross.org/fire) for more information, including an escape plan to practice with your family. You can also download our free Emergency app and free Red Cross First Aid app for instant access on how to control bleeding, help someone who is choking and other scenarios. Search “American Red Cross” in app stores.

*About the American Red Cross:*

*The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, please visit [redcross.org](http://redcross.org) or [CruzRojaAmericana.org](http://CruzRojaAmericana.org), or visit us on Twitter at [@RedCross](https://twitter.com/RedCross).*