

Kitchen Safety Tips

From Cosmopolitan Cornbread



Wash Hands and Prep Surface

Always begin by thoroughly washing your hands with warm soap and water. Wipe down your food prep surface.

Clean As You Go

Clean up spills and messes as you go, to prevent contamination, slips or accidents in the kitchen.

Avoid Floor Hazards

Remove loose rugs or other tripping hazards. Make sure anything on the floor is non-slip.

Shoes

Closed-toed shoes are recommended.

Use Fresh Cleaning Cloths/Sponges

Change your dishcloths frequently, with fresh, clean ones.

If you use sponges, you can periodically sanitize them. Moisten the sponge and pop in in the microwave for 2 minutes and allow to cool.

Avoid Bumps & Bruises

Close cabinet doors and drawers once you are done getting items out, so you don't bump your head or bruise a shin when moving around the kitchen.

Sharp Knives are Safe Knives

Using a dull knife to cut up ingredients is actually more dangerous than a sharp knife. Dull knives require more pressure to cut through the items, and increase the risk of slipping and cutting a finger.

Sharp knives more easily cut through the foods, making food prep a safer task.

Electricity & Water Don't Mix

When using appliances in the kitchen, always be mindful of the cords. Make sure they aren't laying in a puddle of liquids, or drape into the sink.

Hair & Clothing

If you have long hair, be careful to keep it away from food preparation surface, hot stoves and pans. Ideally long hair should be pinned back in some way.

Flowing sleeves and loose clothing run the risk of dragging through foods, getting into stove flames or on heating elements. An apron can be helpful to contain loose articles of clothing, as well as keep your clothes clean.

Keep your food sanitary and yourself safe from accidental burns or fire hazards.

Watch Those Handles

Pot & pan handles should be turned to the side, towards the counter, out of the walkway and away from the other stove burners.

Handles that are left sticking out could catch on clothing or be bumped and cause a spill and injuries.

Handles left over other stove burners/cooking element can become extremely hot.

Metal Gets Hot

Metal handles of pots & pans get very hot. Always be aware of that before reaching for one.

Metal utensil handles can also get very hot, especially if you leave them sitting in a pan or pot. Use a small dish or spoon rest to place utensils on the counter, instead of leaving them in your pan.

Potholders Are Your Friend

Always have a couple potholders in a handy location to grasp hot handles or pans without burning your hands.

Use potholders (or trivets) on your counter with hot pots and pans. This will insulate your counter, protect it from damage, and will protect your pans from potential drastic temperature changes. Cast iron has been known to crack, and other metal pans can warp when hot metal comes into contact with cold surfaces or foods.

Along those lines, you never want to put a hot pan into a sink with cold water. Doing so can warp or crack, and ruin your pans.

Non-Stick Pan Safety

Avoid using metal utensils in a non-stick pan. Many pans have chemicals known as PFAs in the nonstick coating. *(PFAs are perfluoroalkyl or polyfluoroalkyl substances. Also called PFCs – perfluorochemicals.)*

Scratching or damaging the coating can potentially allow those chemicals to be released into the foods.

Use wood, silicone or plastic utensils.

If a pan shows damage in the non-stick coating, it is time to replace it.

I would recommend looking for non-stick pan varieties that clearly state that they do not contain chemicals like PFAs/PFCs.

Avoid Steam Burns

When you open the lid of a hot pot or pan, tilt the lid away from your face and body. Steam trapped inside of the pan can be just as hot as the contents inside and can burn you.

This also applies to slow cookers, instant pots, or canner lids when processing jars for food preservation.

Fire Safety

Always know how to prevent and put out a fire.

Fires can be prevented by being careful about clothing and hair as previously talked about. Additionally, by being careful about items placed on the counter. Make sure potholders don't touch stove elements or get into the flames.

Take care to keep foods from spilling onto the stove where they can burn and start a fire. Stoves and ovens should always be kept clean. (See my article on how to clean an oven without chemicals.)

Never dump water on a grease/oil fire. That will only cause the fire to spread.

If a fire happens, immediately put it out with a fire extinguisher. If you do not have a fire extinguisher, fires can be extinguished by smothering them with a pot or pan lid, or by dumping baking soda on it.