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Cooking Fire Safety Rule #1: Get Out and Stay Out!

Kitchen Safety

The leading cause of fire injuries to older adults is cooking fires. Common scenarios are accidentally igniting clothing, forgetting to turn the burner off, and leaving food cooking on the stove. Grease fires and hot oil scalds are also not uncommon. The best way to avoid fire injury is to avoid a fire. Taking these steps will keep you and your kitchen safer:

- Never leave food on the stove unattended,
- Do not wear loose-fitting sleeves while cooking, and
- If a fire does start - do not try to extinguish it unless you have had the training and have the proper equipment!

Statistics show that older adults are less likely to call 911 for assistance immediately. They attempt to extinguish the fire themselves, which oftentimes leads to injury. Many older adults may not want to "impose" on the 911 system because they do not feel that their emergency is a true emergency. Some may be embarrassed to call because they were responsible for starting the fire. Some may fear that their family and neighbors will find out what happened. Still others are reluctant to call because they feel that too many people and too much attention is given to their situation. Although these are valid concerns, the startling fact is that older adults have the highest mortality rate from residential fires and fire injury.

Fire and Rescue, There for You

It is no imposition on the Fire and Rescue system to be called to your home. The Fire and Rescue providers are trained and willing to come to you in your time of need, no matter what your need may be.

- There is no such thing as a small emergency. Trust that the Fire and Rescue providers would rather arrive at a small fire early than arrive at a big fire later.
- There is no embarrassment in calling for help. The only embarrassment would be to lose your home or your life by not calling for help. Chances are your family and neighbors will be supportive of you calling 911. Although you may have a couple of vehicles in front of your home and a group of Fire and Rescue personnel in your living room, remember that they are all there for you. Your community cares about you so much that they provide you with competent people to take care of you and state of the art vehicles to transport you and service your needs.

Two Steps to Safety

If there is a fire in your home take these steps immediately:

1. **Get out of your home and do not go back inside.** Take nothing but a phone (if you have a portable phone) and don't go back inside for anything! If you don't have a cordless phone or cell phone, call from a neighbor's phone.
2. **Once you are outside and safely away from the fire and call 911.**

Seniors are the fastest-growing population in the United States. We are living longer with a better quality of life. Help keep this trend going by using the services that are there for you. Let the firefighters put the fire out. They have the knowledge, experience and equipment to do it properly. So call 911 as soon as a fire occurs then Get Out and Stay Out. You will be glad that you did.

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