# Cooking Safety for Older Adults

## WATCH WHAT YOU HEAT Cooking is the number one cause of home fires

#### **PLAN A: PRIMARY PREVENTION**

- The best time to cook is when you are wide awake, and not drowsy from medications or alcohol.
- Always wipe clean the stove, oven, exhaust fan to prevent grease buildup.
- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Keep a pan lid and dry potholders or oven mitts near you EVERY time you cook.
- Cook on the back burners of the stove when possible.
- Turn pot or pan handles toward the back of the stove.
- When heating food in the microwave, use microwavesafe cookware that allows steam to escape.
- Allow food to rest before removing from the microwave.
- When frying, use a pan lid or splash guard to prevent grease splatter.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave, turn off the stove.
- If you are simmering, baking, roasting, or boiling food, check it regularly. Remain in the home while food is cooking, and use a timer to remind you to check on your cooking.
- After cooking, check the kitchen to make sure all burners and other appliances are turned off.

### PLAN B: SECONDARY PREVENTION

If your food does catch on fire...

- 1. Cover the pan with its lid. A cookie sheet works too. Leave covered until the pan is cool. NEVER move the pot or carry it outside - the pot is too hot to handle and the contents may splash, causing a severe burn.
- 2. Turn the heat off. With the lid on and the heat off, the fire should quickly put itself out. NEVER use water to put out a kitchen fire. Water will cause the oil to splatter and spread the fire, or scald you as it vaporizes.
- 3. If the fire is inside the oven or microwave, keep the door shut and turn it off. Keep closed until the oven is cool.
- 4. If the fire gets out of control- get out, stay out and call 9-1-1. Don't return inside for any reason.

#### **STATS**

- 47% of all home fires are caused by cooking
- Adults >65 are at much higher risk of injury and death from a kitchen fire due to physical, visual, hearing or mental impairments that may slow the quick action necessary in a fire emergency.
- Thinner skin of older adults burn faster and deeper.
- Preventing a burn injury is always better than the pain and trauma of medical treatment afterward.





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Improving the lives of those affected by burn injuries

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