nsc
Fall 2020

Family Safety & Health®

CARING for the caregiver

FIRE PITS DON'T GET BURNED

EASE BACK INTO EXERCISE

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF **KITCHEN SAFETY**

SPONSORED BY:

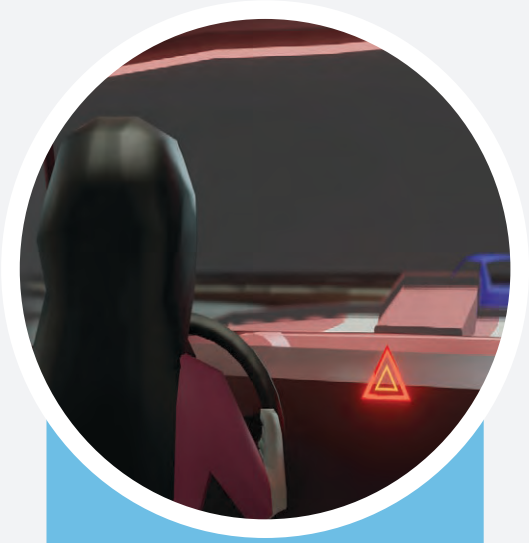
Hon. Charles A. Williams
ASN (EI&E)

PUTTING THE BRAKES ON PEDESTRIAN MISHAPS

SCAN ME

Over the past five years, the Department of the Navy (DON) has experienced 62 pedestrian-related mishaps impacting 72 Sailors and Marines. Of these mishaps, 16 were fatal. So far, in fiscal 2020, as of 31 July 2020, the DON has already experienced seven fatal pedestrian mishaps, reflecting a disturbing 192% increase in fatal pedestrian crashes this FY, compared to the five-year average of 2.4 fatal mishaps over the same time period.

According to an analysis of available pedestrian mishap data during this timeframe, Naval Safety Center (NAVSAFECEN) analysts noted the leading human factors contributing to these mishaps were that the pedestrian, driver or both either failed to keep their eyes on the road or failed to recognize the hazardous conditions that led up to the mishap, i.e., the task at hand, driving or crossing the street or highway, etc. The analysts further noted 78% of the 36 pedestrian mishaps that occurred off the installation involved no crosswalks.



Top illustration by Catalina Magee / Bottom illustration by Chesky

WHEN YOUR VEHICLE BREAKS DOWN

Disabled vehicles are one reason people find themselves on the side of the road. If you are driving and experience vehicle or motorcycle trouble, turn on your hazard lights and safely ease well off the road.

NAVSAFECEN's Shore Safety and Occupational Health Manager Keith Wilson advises exiting the vehicle away from traffic (i.e., if pulled over on the right side of the road, exit from the passenger side doors). Don't stand in front of or behind the vehicle. Avoid using the cell while walking because texting, talking on the phone or playing games while walking can lead to fatal consequences.

Keep a constant eye on traffic, to include bicyclists.

This upward trend is not limited to the DON. Pedestrian fatalities have increased 41% in the last 10 years to 6,227 deaths along U.S. roads, according to the Governor's Highway Safety Association's (GHSA) latest statistics. As a safety advocate, NAVSAFECEN tracks pedestrian mishaps for Sailors and Marines. Injuries or fatalities from walking along an open road concern NAVSAFECEN Shore Safety and Occupational Health Manager Keith Wilson.

"Stop using your phone while walking, and that's not just while in a crosswalk or intersection," Wilson said. "If you are using your phone, you don't have 100% of your attention on the traffic around you."

The same thinking applies to operating a vehicle, of course. Using a phone – even hands-free – greatly increases your risk of hitting a pedestrian, bicyclist or another vehicle. Staying off your phone ensures you're more alert to pedestrians and other drivers on the road.

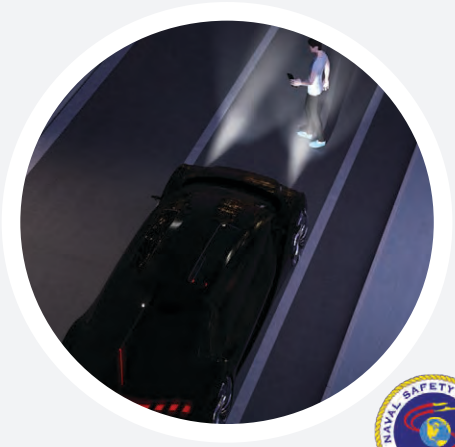
While driving or taking that early morning bike ride, be vigilant for anything moving into your path. Keep your head up and your eyes on the path ahead of you. Vigilance includes paying attention to traffic signals, vehicles and pedestrians – yield to pedestrians in crosswalks and along the road. Choose bike paths or trails when possible. Department of Defense Instruction 6055.04 iterates pedestrians use paths or sidewalks along roadways and walk facing oncoming traffic when they are not available and to wear reflective outer garments at night or during reduced visibility.

The instruction further prohibits individuals from walking, jogging, running, skating or skateboarding on roads during high traffic and peak traffic periods.

For pedestrians, this includes using marked crosswalks and complying with pedestrian signals at intersections. And remember to look both ways twice before stepping off the curb. Never assume vehicles will stop or even see you and don't turn your back on moving traffic. Do not cross in the middle of the block or from behind an object where a driver's view could be obscured.

For drivers, defensive driving includes slowing down in areas where many pedestrians are gathered, in school zones and residential areas. Be patient with older pedestrians or disabled persons crossing the street and look for eye contact from the pedestrian to acknowledge having seen them. Furthermore, put the cell down and avoid other distractions such as eating or tinkering with your GPS system.

Whether operating a motorcycle, bicycle or vehicle, treat pedestrians as if they are about to cross your path. As a pedestrian, treat every motorcycle, bicycle or vehicle as if it will hit you. "Walking along a street or road carries a lot of risk," Wilson said. "If you act as if every moving car will hit you, the odds of being on our pedestrian mishap list will be much lower."



Fall 2020 Vol. 79, No. 3

Family Safety & Health

Features

8

cover story
Caring for the caregiver
Your well-being is important, too
By Barry Bottino

12

be well
Eat the rainbow
Colorful fruits and vegetables = a healthier you
By Jennifer Yario

14

home safety
Fall is the right time to winterize your home
By Melissa J. Ruminski

16

on the road
Watch your speed
Let's look out for each other
By Alan Ferguson

20

fitness and recreation
Ready to start exercising again?
We've got tips
By Kevin Druley

22

protect yourself
The do's and don'ts of kitchen safety
By Barry Bottino

26

your health
Multiple sclerosis
Know the symptoms
By Alan Ferguson

28

outdoor safety
Keep it safe around the fire
By Barry Bottino

30

fire safety
Full house ... fire hazard?
Electrical safety when everyone's home
By Melissa J. Ruminski

In Every Issue

news briefs 4
quick tips 18
expert column 32
kids page 33
test your memory 34

NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Andrew O. Johnson, Chairman
Elaine Beitler, Vice Chairman

EXECUTIVE STAFF
Lorraine M. Martin, President and CEO
Nick Smith, COO
Tom Bell, Chief Marketing Officer

STAFF
Deborah Meyer, Publisher, *deborah.meyer@nsc.org*
Melissa J. Ruminski, Editor, *melissa.ruminski@nsc.org*
Jennifer Yario, Managing Editor, *jennifer.yario@nsc.org*
Paul Wleklinski, Copy Editor, *paul.wleklinski@nsc.org*
Barry Bottino, Associate Editor, *barry.bottino@nsc.org*
Alan Ferguson, Associate Editor, *alan.ferguson@nsc.org*
Kevin Druley, Associate Editor, *kevin.druley@nsc.org*
Amy Bellinger, Online Content Manager
Joy Tan-Pipilas, Production Coordinator
Subscriptions/Circulation, *subscriptions@nsc.org*

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS (4 ISSUES)
Member price: $19.45; nonmember price: $25.30.

SPECIAL SERVICES
- Bulk discount prices
- Special custom and home-mailing options
- New subscriptions
- Service outside the U.S.A.

Please call Customer Service at (800) 621-7615.

Mailing inquiries/address changes: Call Circulation at (800) 621-7615, ext. 52292.

REPRINTS
Material may not be reproduced in any fashion without the National Safety Council's permission.

Although the information and recommendations contained in this publication have been compiled from sources believed to be reliable, the National Safety Council makes no guarantee as to, and assumes no responsibility for, the correctness, sufficiency or completeness of such information or recommendations. Other or additional safety measures may be required under particular circumstances.

Postmaster: Send address corrections to:
National Safety Council
1121 Spring Lake Drive
Itasca, IL 60143-3201

Family Safety & Health (ISSN 0749-310X) is published quarterly by the National Safety Council, 1121 Spring Lake Dr., Itasca, IL 60143-3201.

Copyright ©2020 by the National Safety Council. Printed in U.S.A.

People are using household products in unsafe ways during pandemic: survey

Washing foods with bleach, applying household cleaning or disinfectant products to the hands or skin, and intentionally inhaling or ingesting these products – they're all some of the "non-recommended, high-risk practices" nearly 2 out of 5 U.S. adults said they've tried to prevent contracting COVID-19, results of a recent survey indicate.

Researchers from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, including the agency's COVID-19 response team, looked at data from an online survey of a nationally representative cohort of 502 U.S. adults. The survey included questions about general knowledge, attitudes and practices related to the use of household cleaners and disinfectants, as well as about specific information regarding cleaning and disinfection strategies for preventing the transmission of COVID-19.

Among the 39% of respondents who said they'd engaged in these unsafe behaviors within the past month:

- 19% applied bleach to food items.
- 18% used cleaning and disinfecting products on their skin.
- 10% misted their body with a household spray.
- 6% inhaled vapors from cleaners or disinfectants.
- 4% drank or gargled diluted bleach solutions, soapy water, or other cleaning and disinfectant solutions.

Overall, 77% of the respondents didn't know they should use only room-temperature water to dilute bleach solutions, and 65% were unaware they shouldn't mix bleach with vinegar. One-quarter of the respondents reported experiencing at least one adverse health effect, which they believed resulted from the use of disinfectants or cleaners.

Study finds 'Dr. Google' not all that accurate with medical advice

Do you self-diagnose your medical problems using online symptom checkers, or "Dr. Google"? If so, you likely aren't getting the most accurate information, researchers from Edith Cowan University caution.

The researchers submitted brief medical condition information into 36 international mobile and web-based symptom checkers. They found that the algorithm-based programs provided the accurate diagnosis as the first result only 36% of the time. The correct diagnosis was in the top three only 52% of the time, and in the top 10 only 58% of the time.

In addition, the symptom checkers were only 49% accurate in determining when and where to seek medical care. The programs performed better with emergency and urgent care situations (60%) than non-emergencies (30% to 40%).

"While it may be tempting to use these tools to find out what may be causing your symptoms, most of the time they are unreliable at best and can be dangerous at worst," lead researcher Michella Hill said.

Photo: Bet_Noire/iStockphoto

Want to concentrate better? Skip foods high in saturated fat, researchers say

A piece of cake or slice of pizza might give you a brief moment of satisfaction, but it also may make it harder for you to concentrate, researchers from Ohio State University say.

The researchers asked 51 women to eat meals that contained either high levels of saturated fat (known as "bad" fats) or high levels of unsaturated fat ("good" fats such as those found in salmon, nuts or avocado). Five hours later, the women took a 10-minute test that measured concentration, attention and reaction times. One to four weeks later, they ate the opposite meal and re-took the test.

The results: After eating the meal high in saturated fat, the women performed worse on the test, especially in regard to response times, attention levels and adapting to changes in task demands. "This was just one meal," Annelise Madison, lead study author and an OSU graduate student in clinical psychology, said. "It's pretty remarkable that we saw a difference."

The researchers said the findings suggest concentration problems could be even more extreme in people who are stressed and turn to fatty foods for comfort.

"What we know is that when people are more anxious, a good subset of us will find high-saturated-fat food more enticing than broccoli," Janice Kiecolt-Glaser, director of the Institute for Behavioral Medicine Research at OSU, said. "We know from other research that depression and anxiety can interfere with concentration and attention as well. When we add that on top of the high-fat meal, we could expect the real-world effects to be even larger."

The study was published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

Photo: Garetsworkshop/iStockphoto

Use your sunscreen!
Even though an estimated 9,500 people are diagnosed with skin cancer every day, more than one-quarter of people who responded to a recent American Academy of Dermatology survey said they rarely or never take steps to protect themselves from the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays.

Attention long nappers
Researchers at Huazhong University of Science and Technology found that people who regularly nap 90 minutes or more a day are nearly 25% more likely to suffer a stroke than people who don't. They say an overall inactive lifestyle may play a role.

Everything in moderation
Want to "enjoy your coffee and good health too"? Researchers from the University of South Australia say keeping your daily consumption below six cups will help you avoid an increased risk of developing obesity, osteoarthritis and joint disease.

Simple steps can help keep sanitation workers safe, association says

The Solid Waste Association of North America is asking the public to take simple steps to help protect sanitation workers from exposure to COVID-19. That includes holding off on home projects that generate large amounts of trash.

According to the SWANA, residential waste collection has increased up to 38% in some communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. And that puts workers at risk. "[They're] picking up waste from homes where people may have COVID-19, and so there's concern about exposure to the virus through the trash," SWANA Executive Director and CEO David Biderman said.

Pointing to research that shows the coronavirus may last on cardboard for 24 hours and live on plastic for up to three days, the SWANA offers recommendations for safely disposing of waste and recycling materials:

- Wash your hands before taking out trash and recycling containers.
- Sanitize container lids and handles.
- Don't place plastic gloves, masks and other medical waste in recycling bins. Put them in your trash can.

Other ways you can help, Biderman said, are breaking down large cardboard boxes to make sure they fit inside your recycling bin; and taking the time to empty, rinse and dry other recyclable items such as plastics and glass.

"There's a lot more recyclables being generated, and so people need to really know how to manage that material in their home and put the right stuff in the blue bin," he added.

The SWANA says to check with your service provider about changes such as temporary closing of drop-off centers or suspension of yard waste collection.

Eating more fruits, vegetables and grains may reduce risk of Type 2 diabetes

Are you struggling to eat healthy? Two recent studies might offer motivation to stay on track.

New research shows that eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grains may help lower the risk of Type 2 diabetes – when combined with healthy lifestyle habits such as exercising regularly and not smoking.

One study, led by Westlake University School of Life Sciences principal investigator Ju-Sheng Zheng, looked at data for 9,754 individuals with Type 2 diabetes and compared it with 13,662 individuals without the condition. Findings showed that eating 66 additional grams of fruit and vegetables per day could reduce the risk of developing Type 2 diabetes by 25%.

"Even a moderately increased amount of fruit and vegetables among populations who typically consume low levels could help to prevent Type 2 diabetes," the researchers wrote.

Another study, led by researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, examined questionnaire responses of 158,259 women and 36,525 men who didn't have type 2 diabetes at the time of baseline testing.

Researchers identified numerous foods and ingredients as whole grains, including whole wheat and whole wheat flour, whole oats and whole oat flour, whole cornmeal and corn flour, brown rice, and popcorn. Overall, participants in the category of highest total whole grain consumption showed a 29% lower rate of Type 2 diabetes than counterparts in the lowest category following adjustment for lifestyle and dietary risk factors.

The studies were published in *The BMJ*.

Photo: FangXiaNuo/iStockphoto

Drinking alcohol won't protect you against COVID-19, experts say

Although alcohol is a key ingredient in hand sanitizers that can help kill the coronavirus, alcoholic drinks don't have the same effect – and may actually hinder your immune system's response to COVID-19, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism is cautioning consumers.

To be effective against the coronavirus, hand sanitizers must contain at least 60% ethyl alcohol, the NIAAA says. In contrast, a person's blood alcohol concentration after one standard drink is in the range of 0.01% to 0.03% – "a tiny fraction of the concentration needed to produce an antiseptic action." A blood alcohol concentration of 0.4% can be fatal.

"Alcohol misuse makes the body more susceptible to viral infections and can worsen the prognosis," the institute adds. "Alcohol in the body at the time of exposure to a pathogen tends to impair the body's immediate immune response to the pathogen, making it easier for an infection to develop."

Longer term, excessive alcohol consumption impairs the immune system's response in the lungs and has been linked to acute respiratory distress syndrome. "In fact," the NIAAA says, "individuals who misuse alcohol chronically are more likely to develop ARDS, more likely to need mechanical ventilation, have a prolonged stay in the intensive care unit and have a higher risk of mortality from ARDS. All of these effects of alcohol misuse could certainly complicate COVID-19 prevention, treatment and recovery." FS&H

Photo: BrianAJackson/iStockphoto

Help stop the spread of COVID-19

Take the gloves off

Think you're safer wearing gloves while out and about? The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology says vinyl, latex or nitrile gloves could become "more contaminated than bare hands" and "may actually be spreading germs in the community." Skip them, and wash your hands instead.

Clean your phone

We take our cellphones with us everywhere – and that may make them "Trojan horses" for spreading the coronavirus, researchers from Bond University believe. They say cleaning your phone each day is a small action that may help save lives.

Find what works

The Environmental Protection Agency has a mobile app that lets you search an online database of more than 400 disinfectant products that can help prevent and reduce the spread of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Find it at *epa.gov*.

Photo: CasarsaGuru/iStockphoto

Caring for the caregiver

Your well-being is important, too

BY BARRY BOTTINO

Whether you're in the grocery store, at church, or at the bank or hair salon, you've likely seen a family caregiver.

What do caregivers look like? Just like you. They can be a relative, a neighbor, a friend or a community member. As AARP puts it, caregivers can be "families of kin or families of choice."

According to AARP's 2020 report "Caregiving in the U.S.," an estimated 53 million adults – more than 1 out of 5 Americans – serve as caregivers to a fellow adult or a child with special needs. That total is up from 43.5 million people in 2015.

"There are more and more people in this situation," said Amy Goyer, who serves as a caregiving expert for AARP, a nonprofit organization that advocates for people 50 and older. "You can be thrown into it if your loved one has a sudden crisis or a catastrophic health event. Or, it can be gradual support over time."

Goyer has experienced both situations with her late parents. Her mother suffered a stroke at age 63, while her father had Alzheimer's disease, which she called "a long, 12-year journey."

Caregiving can involve taking on plenty of responsibility, along with the stress and pressure that comes with it.

Self-care that suits you

Providing care to a loved one can often lead people to put their own health and well-being on a back burner.

According to the Family Caregiver Alliance, caregivers report issues such as lack of sleep, poor diet, not exercising, working when sick, and postposing or forgoing their own medical care.

"Many people experience isolation and all the things that drain you," Goyer said. "You may have a lack of resources and support. There's stress and fear."

That's why Goyer encourages caregivers to make time to care for themselves, even if it's just 10 minutes of exercise or relaxation. (See "How to fill your tank," p. 11.)

"I can't find two hours, but I can find 10 minutes," she said.

Costs of caregiving

The Family Caregiver Alliance, on its Caregiver.org website, lists nine questions to ask yourself and other family members about the financial aspects of becoming a caregiver. They include: How will you pay your own rent/mortgage if you're moving in to care for somebody? How will you be reimbursed for added expenses of caregiving? What happens if the person you're caring for runs out of money?

Amy Goyer (center), a blogger for AARP, was a caregiver for her mother, Patricia, and her father, Robert.

Those questions and the others are valuable because, according to AARP, 45% of caregivers experience at least one of the following five financial impacts:

- Stopped saving money
- Took on more debt
- Used up personal short-term savings
- Left bills unpaid/paid bills late
- Borrowed money from family or friends

In addition, your time is an important commodity. Six out of 10 caregivers said they worked full time in addition to providing care, according to AARP. Meanwhile, more than 30% spend 21 or more hours a week on caregiving duties. "That's a part-time job," Goyer said. "If you're already working, now you've got two jobs."

AARP encourages caregivers who work to meet with their supervisor and human resources department to discuss resources that are available to help, such as flexible work options, counseling support services, paid time off or family leave, or elder care referrals.

The right information

To many people, the health care system can cause plenty of confusion. This can be especially true for caregivers, says Jo-Ana Chase, an assistant professor at the University of Missouri's Sinclair School of Nursing.

Chase studied 40 caregivers of patients who were sent home from a hospitalization with home health care. Although the patients received information when they were discharged, many caregivers said they had to learn on their own when caring for someone.

"A large majority said they didn't really receive a lot of useful information or any information at all when an older adult was discharged," Chase said.

Instead, they often relied on Google, asking friends or finding caregiver support groups.

Chase noted in the study that written instructions and demonstrations from home health professionals were an important aspect of training caregivers.

"We had one caregiver who really appreciated the written instructions," Chase said. "He would show it to his loved one and say, 'Look, I'm not making this up.'"

Caregivers also should keep a list of questions and take it to every medical appointment.

"Don't be afraid to ask," Chase said. "The information you receive will be helpful. It will give you greater confidence."

Find the rewards

To provide additional care for her parents, Goyer relocated to Arizona. Although she took on greater responsibility, she also earned greater rewards by spending more time with her mother and father.

"The biggest reward for me was being there for my loved ones who needed me," Goyer said. "I couldn't solve every crisis. I could not be a perfect caregiver. There is no such thing."

She urges caregivers to find small joys that will endure as lasting memories. When she would tuck her mother in each night, Goyer remembers her mother's bright smile.

"That image is forever in my mind," she said. "I knew she felt safe and secure and loved and cared for."

Goyer, who began her professional life as a music therapist, used music regularly to help her father.

"I know I made his life better," she said. FS&H

How to fill your tank

Driving down the road one day, Amy Goyer knew her luck – and fuel tank – could run out at any moment.

"I was running out of gas," said Goyer, a caregiver expert for AARP.com. "I was afraid I was going to break down."

With little fuel to spare, she made it. As she left the station, Goyer realized the panic she had felt is what caregivers experience every day, and that those who give care run better on a full tank.

"That was my 'aha' moment," she said.

So Goyer wrote a blog about four levels of "fill-ups" for caregivers – quick tank fillers, premium fill-ups, scheduled tune-ups and routine maintenance. Taking part in only one level, Goyer says, won't suffice. As a caregiver, you should partake in all four categories to ensure you're maintaining your physical and mental well-being.

The suggestions include:

Fill up quickly. Try phoning a friend, enjoying a mug of your favorite coffee or tea, or chatting with friends on social media. Goyer recommends the AARP Family Caregivers Discussion Group on Facebook, which provides tips, support and a way to connect with other caregivers.

At a premium. Enjoy an exercise class, play a round of golf, take a hike or do other things to give yourself a one- to two-hour break. Goyer would take her parents on what they called fun Friday adventures. "Mom would get her hair done, then we'd go out to eat," she said. "That change in routine helped fill me up and filled them up, too."

Get in tune. Plan out a longer period of respite and go on vacation to recharge. Travel for pleasure or attend a workshop or retreat.

Maintain yourself. Commit to regular events, such as eating a healthy diet, exercising, getting regular medical checkups and massages or acupuncture, for example.

"This is not selfish," Goyer said. "It's practical. You can't expect yourself to run on empty. Anything we do for ourselves is good."

Eat the rainbow

BY JENNIFER YARIO

We all know fruits and vegetables do our bodies good. Still, healthy eating is a challenge for a lot of us. And if you've been at home the past few months because of the coronavirus, grabbing some Halloween candy from the cabinet instead of a baby carrot from the fridge may be much more appealing.

But creating and maintaining healthy eating habits is important – especially now. "Studies show that eating a variety of fruits and vegetables boosts your immune system," says Kathy Stanislawski, registered dietitian at St. Alexius Medical Center in Hoffman Estates, IL.

They have lots of other benefits too, Stanislawski said. Eating fruits and veggies "adds texture and appeal to your plate, fills you up with fiber for a healthy digestive system, and provides little calories." They're also rich in vitamins and minerals.

Different colors of fruits and vegetables have specific health benefits. By including a variety of them on your plate – called "eating the rainbow" – you can make sure you're getting the illness-fighting nutrients you need to help your body function at its best.

Red

Fruits and vegetables rich in red color contain the antioxidants lycopene and ellagic acid. Antioxidants help protect your body's cells from the free radicals that play a role in the development of heart disease, diabetes and even cancer. Tomatoes, red peppers, red apples, cherries and strawberries are just a handful of the foods you can eat to get these disease-fighting benefits.

Orange

We all need Vitamin C. Orange-colored fruit is packed with it, as well as carotenoids, including beta-carotene. Your body converts beta-carotene into vitamin A, which promotes healthy vision. Orange is also the color of many citrus fruits, which can help increase your blood flow and reduce your risk of having a stroke. And don't forget to indulge in pumpkin, sweet potatoes or carrots. You can find these benefits in peaches, cantaloupe and, well, oranges, too.

Green

We've all heard how important "leafy greens" are to our diet. That's because they're some of the healthiest foods we can put in our mouths. The benefits are many: They have vitamin K, which is essential for our blood and bone health. They're packed full of antioxidants and folates. Kale alone has as much calcium as milk. Broccoli boosts your immune system and helps block cancer-causing properties. Other greens you can add to your diet include cucumbers, spinach, grapes, avocados and edamame.

Photo: Viktar/iStockphoto

Blue

Help lower your blood pressure naturally by helping yourself to some blue-colored foods. Did we mention that these foods have anti-aging properties? Grab a handful of blueberries and help slow the march of time on your body. Other blue-colored foods to add to your plate include the deceptively named blackberries, which actually *are* a dark blue shade, and some you might not realize come in the color blue, such as corn, potatoes and carrots.

Yellow

Eating the yellow part of the fruit and vegetable rainbow gives you many of the same benefits as eating foods that fall under the orange layer – vitamin C and carotenoids. Brighten up your plate with some sweet corn, yellow bell peppers, pineapple, squash or lemons.

Purple

They're at the bottom of the rainbow, but that doesn't mean they're less important. Purple fruits and vegetables share similar benefits to blue-colored foods: Both groups have anthocyanins, which are strong antioxidants that help protect our cells from damage and, like their red-colored friends at the top of the rainbow, help reduce our risk of cancer, stroke and heart disease. Plums, prunes and grapes are some purple-colored fruits. Going the veggie route, you can pick from purple cabbage, radishes and eggplant, among other options. FS&H

Photo: kali9/Stockphoto

Fall is the right time to winterize your home

BY MELISSA J. RUMINSKI

We know – not everyone is a fan of winter. If you live in a cold-weather area, chances are good you'd rather not spend your autumn days thinking about the snow and frigid temperatures to come.

But fall is the perfect time to get your home ready for winter weather. By taking steps now, you'll be able to stay snug and warm indoors by the time the first flurry flies. Here's what to do.

Indoors

Test your **home heating system**. You don't want to find out it's not working on the first cold day of the season. Be prepared for a brief smell as the heat burns off dust that has built up on furnace parts and ductwork. And don't forget to replace the furnace filter.

Have **chimneys and flues** inspected by a professional. When you schedule your appointment, ask what precautions the service technician will take (like wearing a mask) to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

If you don't have a **carbon monoxide detector** in your home, install one. Basic models cost around $20. Change the batteries in existing carbon monoxide and smoke detectors.

Check the **insulation around pipes** to make sure it's adequate to keep pipes from freezing. If you're a do-it-yourselfer, you can find videos online showing you what to look for.

Outdoors

Check around **doors and windows** for gaps where cold air could get inside. Apply, repair or replace caulk or weather stripping if needed.

Step back and scan your **roof**. If you notice any missing or loose-looking shingles, call a repair company.

Clear **gutters** of leaves and other debris. If you're not able to safely do it yourself, hire a service.

Disconnect **garden hoses** from outdoor spouts and, if you can, store them in a garage or basement. **Automatic sprinkler systems** need to be drained so they don't freeze when temperatures drop.

If you have a **deck**, put on a fresh coat of sealant to help shield it from the elements. Don't have space to store your outdoor furniture indoors? Consider purchasing covers.

Put a cover over your **gas grill**. Never bring propane tanks indoors! This includes the garage.

Make sure you've got what you need for **snow removal**. If you own a snowblower, give it a test-start. Stock up on ice melt, and make sure you've got a good shovel with an ergonomic handle to help protect your back.

Winter storms can lead to power outages. If you own a **portable generator**, bring it outside and test it to make sure it's ready to go when you need it. FS&H

Watch your speed

Let's look out for each other

BY ALAN FERGUSON

You may think speeding isn't a big deal. The truth is that it was the leading cause of fatal crashes in 2018. It was a factor in 26% of all traffic deaths that year and resulted in nearly 9,400 deaths – more than 25 a day – according to the National Safety Council.

Speeding is "the one traffic safety issue that we struggle with because people often do get away with it," said Pam Shadel Fischer, senior director of external engagement and special projects for the Governors Highway Safety Association. "We need them to understand that bad things can happen."

A COMPLETE STOP

A passenger vehicle traveling 55 mph will need 265 feet to come to a complete stop – and that's if the driver can react and press the brake pedal in 1.5 seconds, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

At 70 mph, that same driver needs 387 feet to come to a stop.

This is a problem for younger drivers, who simply don't have the experience to spot hazards that quickly, said Ryan Pietzsch, subject matter expert for driver safety education and training at NSC.

"By the time they recognize a hazard, it's much later than an experienced driver and it can result in catastrophic failures," Pietzsch said.

On the flip side, a mature driver's reaction time may be reduced by "physiological changes" such as loss of muscle tone, flexibility or vision.

"These drivers may have the experience necessary to recognize a hazard in time, but their ability to physically react and apply the brake may be delayed," Pietzsch said.

Photo: ablokhin/iStockphoto

YOUNG DRIVERS

Know a young driver who needs convincing? Pietzsch recommends you try "appealing to their vanity." Whatever their interests – sports, playing music, etc. – let them know that speeding might cause a crash that could keep them from taking part in those activities.

Appealing to their humanity is another strong argument.

"The choices you make when behind the wheel, they affect other people," Pietzsch said. "Think about this: If you were to kill someone ... or if you die because of a choice you made behind the wheel, who is left behind to suffer the pain?"

Teaching young drivers to occasionally glance at their speedometer is one technique that can help them control their speed, Fischer said. Another is the use of cruise control – but only when weather conditions are good.

She also recommends "commentary driving" – drivers say aloud what they're seeing or doing. This will help you gauge how well young or inexperienced drivers notice speed limits.

Of course, adults need to set a good example with their own driving habits, even when their children are young. Kids are observant.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Speeding isn't only a problem on highways. Going over the speed limit in residential areas and neighborhoods is dangerous because pedestrians, cyclists and children are more likely to be on or near streets.

The speed limit for many residential areas is 25 mph. A 2011 study from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that the risk of death for pedestrians struck by a vehicle going 23 mph is 10%. That risk jumps to 50% at 42 mph and 75% at 50 mph.

People out walking or riding their bikes "could be your family member, your friend or your neighbor, so you wouldn't want anything bad to happen to them," Fischer said. "We've got to slow it down and we've got to be looking out for them."

REDUCING STRESS

Some drivers say they speed because it gives them a thrill. Others have a competitive nature that comes out when they get behind the wheel.

"They don't want someone else to get in front of them," Pietzsch said. "They want to be in front. They may even have this need or extreme desire to 'win.'"

If you're one of these drivers, you need to curb that instinct, he says. That competitiveness or need to get in front of another driver is stressful. And we could all use a little less stress.

Pietzsch said he has challenged some drivers in his classes to follow the speed limit and commit to proper following distance (at least three seconds in ideal conditions, and even longer for non-ideal conditions).

"What we find is that drivers that make these simple changes in their driving experience a dramatic decrease in stress," Pietzsch said. "I often hear back from students that come back to me and say, 'I did that and I was amazed how less stressful my commute was this morning.' This is always a rewarding opportunity for me to respond, 'Wasn't that worth it? Not to mention the fact that you might save a life. Reducing the stress in your life by making better choices behind the wheel – isn't that worth it?'" FS&H

Photo: RiverNorthPhotography/iStockphoto

Help keep COVID-19 at bay: 13 healthy habits and behaviors

Making personal hygiene and cleanliness a priority are among the 13 healthy behaviors and habits one Ball State University professor says can help lower your risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19 – and help you stay healthy in the future.

Jagdish Khubchandani, a health sciences professor, based his research on mechanisms of transmission and characteristics of SARS-CoV-2 – the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. His recommendations:

1. Shower regularly, because the virus can live on surfaces for days.
2. Keep your clothes clean. Don't wear the same clothes several days in a row, and do laundry frequently.
3. Don't bite your fingernails or rub your eyes. If you've got young kids, discourage them from sucking their thumbs.
4. Try not to scratch your face, head or body.
5. Wash all fresh fruits and vegetables before eating them.
6. Don't litter – either inside or outside your home. You don't want to raise the risk of illness for family members, sanitation workers or trash pickers.
7. Remove all leftovers, garbage, masks and gloves from your car and dispose of them in a trash can.
8. Maintain good hygiene while growing out hair, beards or nails, or using hair and face accessories.
9. Cover your face when coughing or sneezing to avoid spreading germs.
10. Wash your hands after using restrooms, being in public places such as gas stations and grocery stores, or using elevators.
11. Clean your cellphone and computer devices, along with desk spaces.
12. Don't rely on carryout or restaurant deliveries as your only source of meals. Try to add more healthy foods to your diet.
13. Don't reuse masks, gloves or personal care devices without first cleaning them.

Time to clean the fridge

Are your refrigerator shelves getting a little sticky? Or maybe you've just thrown away an item that spoiled or is part of a safety recall. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention lays out the steps for cleaning and sanitizing the inside of your fridge.

1. Empty your refrigerator. Take out shelving, drawers and any other removable parts and wash them by hand with hot, soapy water. (Dish detergent is fine.) Don't run cold glass shelves or drawers under hot water – the glass could crack. Let them warm up to room temperature first.
2. Wipe the inside of the empty refrigerator with hot, soapy water, then wipe with clean water and dry with a clean towel.
3. Now it's time to sanitize. Use a solution of 1 tablespoon of liquid bleach in 1 gallon of water to wipe down the insides of the fridge.
4. Before returning food and beverage containers to your clean refrigerator, wipe them down.
5. Wash your hands when you're done cleaning. Use hot, soapy water to wipe kitchen counters or tables that held food, beverages, refrigerator parts and cleaning materials. When you're finished, wash any towels you used.

Top photo: rustycanuck/iStockphoto; bottom photo: kali9/iStockphoto

Good hygiene at the gas station

The next time you fuel up at a gas station, consider this: Most pump handles contain 11,000 times more germs than a toilet seat in a public restroom. And the keypad on the pump? The buttons typically have 15,000 times more germs than a public toilet seat, according to a tip sheet from KeepTruckingSafe.org.

If you go inside the gas station, think about all the other objects you might be touching that others do as well. This includes door handles, restroom faucets, soft drink fountains, and lottery ticket or movie rental machines.

"Handwashing is even more vital during the COVID-19 [pandemic] because the virus can live for up to 72 hours on plastics, 48 hours on stainless steel and 24 hours on cardboard," the tip sheet states. Washing and sanitizing your hands often is the best protection against infection when it comes preventing transmission from frequently touched objects.

Tips include:

- ✓ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands, and don't bite your fingernails.
- ✓ Make sure you have enough soap and hand sanitizer at all times for ready use.
- ✓ Wet, lather and scrub your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, then rinse and dry them with a clean towel.
- ✓ Clean under your fingernails and keep them short and trimmed.
- ✓ If soap and water aren't available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Make sure the sanitizer covers your entire hands and rub them together until they feel dry.

To download the tip sheet, go to *keeptruckingsafe.org/assets/901392020.pdf*. FS&H

Prevent tick bites

Ticks can carry potentially life-threatening infectious diseases. Most active during warmer months (April-September), they're found mainly in grassy, brushy or wooded areas. If you spend time outdoors, here's what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says you can do to prevent tick bites before and after you go out.

Before:

Treat clothing and gear. Use repellent products containing 0.5% permethrin on shoes and clothing. Alternatively, you can buy permethrin-treated clothing and gear.

Use a repellent. Use Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, oil of lemon eucalyptus, 2-undecanone or para-menthane-diol.

After:

Check your clothing for ticks. Remove any ticks you find. Put your dry clothes in a dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill ticks. If the clothes require washing first, hot water is recommended. Cooler-temperature water won't kill ticks.

Take a shower. Showering within two hours of going indoors has been shown to reduce your risk of contracting Lyme disease and may be effective in reducing the risk of other tick-borne diseases. Showering also may help wash off unattached ticks.

Do a full body check. Use a handheld or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body. Ticks are most commonly found under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, on the back of the knees, in and around hair, between the legs, and around the waist.

Many tick-borne diseases, including Lyme disease, can have similar signs and symptoms, most commonly fever and chills, aches and pains, and rash.

Top photo: Michael Sharkey; bottom photo: OleksandrYuchynskyi/iStockphoto

Ready to start exercising again?

We've got tips

BY KEVIN DRULEY

Raise your hand if pandemic-prompted lifestyle changes have led to a few extra pounds – and maybe more time on the couch than usual.

Are you ready to get moving again? We spoke with experts: Lenexa, KS-based personal trainer Phillip Butler; Liana Tobin, personal trainer coordinator for the National Strength and Conditioning Association; and Cedric Bryant, president of the American Council on Exercise. They offered some tips to help you get going.

1 GET READY

Forgive yourself

2020 has been a stressful year for a lot of us, and fitness may not have been at the top of your priority list. Give yourself credit for wanting to get back to regular exercise. You can do it!

Be realistic

Have you been "deconditioned" for an extended period? Butler suggests you walk each day to help build your stamina.

Take it in stages

Easing back into exercise will help you avoid early burnout, Butler said. "Start slow and really set some intentional, maybe small goals, or *a* goal, and knock it off and then start something else," he said. Adds Tobin: "It's better to work up to something as opposed to start off at your maximum."

Photo: diego_cervo/iStockphoto

2 GET SET

Fuel your body

Eat a light snack 90 minutes to two hours before you start exercising, and be sure to hydrate.

Wear appropriate shoes

The right footwear is important. Athletic shoes are a must when you're doing cardio or weights (and tie those shoelaces tight). It's all about support and safety, Tobin said. If you're doing yoga or Pilates, bare feet are OK.

Warm up

Be sure to stretch for a few minutes before exercising – it'll boost your flexibility and get your muscles ready to move. But stay within your comfort level. A stretch that hurts "isn't helping anything," Tobin said.

3 GO

Use the 'talk test'

Don't push yourself too hard. Tobin says many trainers use the "talk test" as a barometer: If you can carry on a conversation while exercising, you're working out at manageable intensity.

Listen to your body

"If you should feel lightheaded or woozy, you want to immediately begin to cool down" and let someone know you're not feeling well, Bryant says. He recommends lying down with your feet elevated above heart level.

Know before you lift

Using weights? "Form before weight" is one widely held rule of weight training. "Do your research," Tobin said. "Know what movements you plan on doing. What are the best ways? If you have access to a trainer, obviously that's the best way to do it, to at least learn the movement first, and then you can go on your way."

Lift safely

"You won't be doing Olympic lifts if you've never lifted," Tobin said. Adds Butler: "Just use light weights and use more reps if you can. That's going to help build your base as well. And it keeps you safe." FS&H

The DO's and DON'Ts of KITCHEN SAFETY

BY BARRY BOTTINO

Photo: yulkapopkova/iStockphoto

A lot of us are spending more time in the kitchen since the COVID-19 pandemic began, cooking meals or baking treats for family.

Whether it's out of necessity, an opportunity to eat healthier or a newfound hobby, you need to be aware that "there are a lot of things in the kitchen you don't think about that could cause you harm," said Betty Brennan, chair of the Emergency Nurses Association's Quality and Safety Advisory Council. "You have to think it through and ask, 'Is my action safe for me and my family?'"

Get cooking on kitchen safety by following these do's and don'ts.

A CLEAN KITCHEN IS A HAPPY KITCHEN

DO wash your hands: David Tiner, chef and director of the Louisiana Culinary Institute, teaches this lesson early to future professionals. It's just as important for people cooking at home.

"The one thing we really preach is proper handwashing," he said. "That's where most foodborne illnesses are going to happen."

Using soap and water for 20 seconds, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says, can effectively stop the spread of germs.

DON'T work in a cluttered kitchen: "Things can fall off (the counter) or you can cut yourself on a knife you didn't see," Brennan said. Clutter also can lead to a towel or an oven mitt being left on the stovetop, where it can catch on fire.

SAY NO TO SALMONELLA

DO understand how foods can be contaminated: For example, if you touch your nose while cutting a chicken breast, any bacteria on your nose is now on the food and will be served to your family.

"If people eat it, it looks fine and it tastes fine, until 30 minutes to 24 hours later," Tiner said. "Then they're sick."

He also says you should keep an eye on raw meats in your refrigerator to make sure liquid from them doesn't spill onto other foods. When it's time to cook, prepare raw meats first, then wash any utensils and cutting boards you use. Sanitize food prep areas before preparing vegetables, and use different cutting boards for meats and vegetables.

DON'T use a kitchen towel for all cleaning tasks: Wiping your hands, then a stove, counter, cutting board, etc., with one cloth towel will merely spread germs.

A CUT ABOVE THE REST

DO keep knives sharp: "A dull knife is actually more dangerous than a sharp knife," Tiner said. "With a dull knife, you have to apply more pressure to cut."

This added pressure can make it easier for a dull knife to slip from your grip, especially when you're cutting a hard food such as a carrot. When a dull knife slips, Tiner said, it's more likely to cause a tearing injury when it hits your hand.

When using a sharp knife, Tiner said your best grip is to pinch the top of the blade in front of the handle with your thumb and forefinger. Then, wrap your other fingers around the handle.

"That gives you more stability and control than just grabbing it by the handle," he said.

Form your non-cutting hand into a "tiger paw," with fingertips tucked toward your palm to protect yourself from cutting injuries. This will help apply pressure to the object you're cutting.

DON'T leave knives in the open: Store your knives in a wooden block or in their own drawer, out of the reach of children, Brennan said. This will prevent knives from falling or being grabbed improperly from a magnetic strip.

FEEL THE BURN?

DO know when to seek treatment: If you burn yourself while cooking, emergency care is necessary if the burn is larger than the palm of your hand, Brennan said. The same goes if the pain is persistent or blisters form on your skin.

DON'T use old oven mitts or pot holders: When these items show signs of wear, throw them away. Frayed or thinning material can cause burn injuries.

TOO MANY COOKS IN THE KITCHEN?

DO make your kids ask for permission to help: Make it a rule that kids have to receive permission before helping you cook, Brennan said. This gives you the opportunity to reinforce safety lessons.

DON'T let kids get too close: Holding a child in your arms or sitting him or her on a countertop while you cook is a no-no. Instead, Brennan said, establish a 3-foot "safe zone" around stoves.

DON'T FEED THE FIRE

DO know how to extinguish a small fire: Cooking on the stovetop? Keep your pot/pan lid or a baking sheet nearby, said Teresa Neal, a fire program specialist at the U.S. Fire Administration. That way, if a fire starts, you can put the lid or baking sheet on top of the pot/pan and turn off the burner, extinguishing the fire.

If something catches fire in your oven, immediately turn off the oven and keep the door closed. "Opening that door will just feed oxygen to the fire," Neal said. Instead, keep a close eye on the fire and let it burn itself out.

For microwave fires, press the "cancel" button to stop the cooking and, if possible, unplug the appliance.

DON'T try to extinguish a large fire: In 2018, cooking was the leading cause of all residential fires (192,700), leading to 3,100 injuries and 170 deaths, according to the USFA.

If a kitchen fire spreads to cabinets or other surfaces, Neal recommends evacuating everyone from the home and calling 911. FS&H

Take charge of your health

You may have better pain relief choices than opioids.

Are you taking:

- o **Percocet**
  (oxycodone with acetaminophen)
- o **Oxycontin**
  (oxycodone)
- o **Vicodin**
  (hydrocodone with acetaminophen)

Opioids can impair you – even when taken as prescribed.

Mixing opioids with alcohol or other drugs can increase risk for opioid overdose.

Ask your doctor about non-opioid pain medication options.

For a more complete list of prescription opioid painkillers, visit nsc.org/opioidfacts.

nsc
National Safety Council

Learn more at nsc.org/opioids

548304 0720 ©2020 National Safety Council

Multiple sclerosis

Know the symptoms

BY ALAN FERGUSON

Muscle weakness or numbness. Vision problems, memory issues, fatigue, dizziness and difficulty walking.

These are some of the possible symptoms of multiple sclerosis, a disease that affects the central nervous system. The National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke estimates that nearly 1 million people in the United States have it.

Although there's no cure for MS, the Mayo Clinic says "treatments can help speed recovery from attacks, modify the course of the disease and manage symptoms."

Photo: shapecharge/iStockphoto

What is MS?

Multiple sclerosis occurs when the immune system attacks the insulation of the body's nerve fibers, known as myelin sheaths. The damage causes scar tissue to develop in multiple areas in the nervous system.

Here's how the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation explains it: The damage MS causes to the nerve is like a cellphone charger cord stripped of its covering, exposing the wires. As a result, the electricity can't reach the phone, just like nerve signals can't reach their intended targets.

This can lead to the symptoms described earlier. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society calls them "variable and unpredictable."

"No two people have exactly the same symptoms, and each person's symptoms can change or fluctuate over time," the organization says. "One person might experience only one or two of the possible symptoms, while another person experiences many more."

The Mayo Clinic advises you to see a doctor if you experience any symptoms for "unknown reasons."

Diagnosis

The cause of the often mysterious disease is unknown and some patients may find that doctors "may not be able to readily identify the cause of the symptoms, leading to years of uncertainty and multiple diagnoses," the NINDS says.

Initial symptoms of MS can include blurred or double vision, blindness in one eye, or "red-green color distortion."

Although many people with MS are diagnosed when they're between 20 and 40 years old, older adults, teens and younger children can get it, too. Women are three times more likely than men to develop it. People whose parents or siblings have MS are at least 2.5% to 3% more likely to develop the disease.

Some experts believe MS may be linked to decreased vitamin D exposure from the sun. Northern U.S. states have twice as many MS cases as southern states, the Multiple Sclerosis Foundation notes. Smoking is a potential risk factor as well.

The Mayo Clinic states that diagnosis of MS may involve blood tests, MRIs, spinal taps or "evoked potential tests," which register the nervous system's electrical signals in response to stimuli.

Types of MS

These are the three most common types of MS:

Relapsing-remitting

Most people have this type, in which symptoms come and go – periods known as attacks or relapses. Attacks may include new symptoms or a repeat of existing ones.

"These usually persist for a short period of time (from a few days to a few months)," the Multiple Sclerosis Association of America says.

After that, people can go without relapses or attacks for months or even years.

Secondary-progressive

The Mayo Clinic reports that at least half of people with relapsing-remitting MS will see a steady progression of symptoms about 10 to 20 years after the disease begins. Those symptoms may or may not go away for periods of time. When symptoms become worse, they usually include issues with mobility and walking, according to the Mayo Clinic, which adds that the rate of disease progression varies quite a bit among people who have this type of MS.

Primary-progressive

This type of MS is marked by a steady progression of symptoms without the relapses.

Treatment

To slow the progression of MS or help curb relapses, experts recommend the use of disease-modifying therapies. Which medication is prescribed may depend on the type of MS.

"Much of the immune response associated with MS occurs in the early stages of the disease. Aggressive treatment with these medications as early as possible can lower the relapse rate, slow the formation of new lesions, and potentially reduce risk of brain atrophy and disability accumulation," the Mayo Clinic says, adding that finding the right treatment "will depend on careful consideration of many factors" that include severity and duration of MS, effectiveness of previous treatments, cost, and other health issues. Many therapies that treat MS "carry significant health risks."

Steroids are often used to treat nerve inflammation from MS attacks. Taking plasma out of the body, mixing it with a protein and putting it back in the body is another treatment.

Physical therapy is one way to help MS patients, and medications can be used to treat stiff muscles or muscle spasms as well as fatigue.

The Multiple Sclerosis Foundation encourages people with MS to be patient and persistent while figuring out which medications work. Other advice: Stop smoking, eat right, get enough sleep, stay active and seek support from others.

"People with good support networks experience better outcomes and better quality of life," the organization states. "Reach out to family, friends and others in your community for help." FS&H

Keep it safe around the fire

BY BARRY BOTTINO

Backyard fire pits and campfires are popular centerpieces for catching up, sharing laughs and, of course, indulging in roasted marshmallows and s'mores.

But any activity involving fire requires extra caution – especially when kids are around. Nearly 11,000 people 19 or younger visited hospital emergency rooms with fire pit-related injuries between 2006 and 2017, and the majority were younger than 5, according to a study published in the American Burn Association's *Journal of Burn Care and Research* in July 2019.

Whether you're enjoying a fire miles from the nearest town or steps away from your home, following these tips will help keep you, your family and your friends safe.

Prepare your pit

From custom builds to DIY projects, permanent fire pits have become a popular backyard feature.

If you're digging your own pit, Jeff Heinz, fire safety specialist for Palm Beach County (FL) Fire Rescue, recommends marking off the size of it and then digging out any grass and debris, leaving at least 3 inches of dirt or sand at the bottom. Next, build a 3-foot "safety zone" around your pit using small rocks.

The National Fire Protection Association says fire pits and campfires should be at least 25 feet away from all structures and flammable objects.

If you're on a campsite and an established metal ring or rock pit is available, use it. If you're building your own, make sure to clear a 3-foot safety zone around the perimeter.

Portable fire pits

One benefit of portable fire pits is they can be moved to the safest location based on the weather. During high winds, a fire has a greater chance of spreading outside your pit.

"If you plan to move the fire pit, do it before you light the fire," said Emily McGee, director of communications

Photo: Ray Ruminski

for the Arlington, VA-based Hearth, Patio and Barbecue Association. Wait a few hours after a fire has been extinguished before relocating your portable pit.

Heinz recommends putting about 3 inches of sand in the bottom of a portable pit to make it less likely to tip over.

Bring your tools, and know before you go

So what else do you need to have on hand to keep things safe?

A trusty shovel, along with a hose that's ready to spray or a bucket of water, are the preferred tools for quickly putting out a fire. If water isn't available, keep a small pile of sand or dirt next to your pit to extinguish the fire as needed.

Fire pit cages and screens can help keep embers from escaping and causing burns or your fire to spread. They also can minimize the risk of someone falling into the pit. You can buy one online or at a home improvement store.

Planning a camping trip? Whitney Forman-Cook, communications director for the National Association of State Foresters, said it's important to check the government website of the state you'll be in to learn about any burning restrictions that may apply.

What to burn

If you're going no farther than your backyard, Heinz says you should use seasoned (dried) hardwoods such as oak, beech or birch. But if you'll be camping, wood from downed trees that have dried out makes good campfire material. The NASF website *SmokeyBear.com* recommends three types:

Tinder: Small twigs and dry leaves, grass, and needles to use at the base of your pit.

Kindling: Sticks smaller than an inch around to help a fire get going.

Fuel: Larger pieces of dry wood to keep the fire burning.

Fire needs oxygen to burn. Stacking larger pieces of wood in the shape of a teepee or log cabin increases airflow and minimizes smoke.

What *not* to burn

Trash belongs in a proper receptacle – not in your fire pit, Forman-Cook said. Burning garbage, along with construction materials or other non-wood products, can cause toxic fumes and create more smoke, Heinz added.

Never use gasoline or other accelerants. "You can't control those," Heinz said. "They can release toxic fumes or start an explosion." The vapors from accelerants are flammable and can cause a fire to "jump around."

Also, make sure the wood you choose isn't wider than the size of your pit. This will help keep your fire from spreading outside your designated area.

Burning recently cut live trees, or "green wood," which have high moisture content, is sure to annoy your guests and neighbors because it produces much more smoke than dry, seasoned wood.

Ready, set ... light

Now that you're ready to get a fire going, a fire starter kit is your safest bet. You can visit your local outdoors or sporting goods store – or go online – to purchase one. Kits often include waterproof matches, some type of kindling and a fire starter stick that will light in any conditions.

Want friends and family members to be safe around your fire? Arrange the chairs you'll need before starting the fire. The one place you don't want anyone to sit is on the bricks or large rocks around your fire pit or campfire.

"Those rocks get extremely hot, and they stay extremely hot," Forman-Cook said.

Make sure older adults are seated upwind to avoid them having to move frequently, said Heinz, who said pets should stay a safe distance away and children must be monitored closely.

Another key requirement with any fire, Heinz said, is having a person in charge of monitoring the area who is able to act quickly if a problem arises. This person should be a responsible, sober adult.

"If you're that person in charge, make sure you're on top of it," he said. "People forget that alcohol is flammable, and it impairs coordination, judgment and reflexes. That's when bad things can happen."

Extinguish the fire

When it's time to put out your fire, start with the bucket of water or hose – or shovels of sand and dirt – you already placed next to the pit. Then, use your shovel to separate the remaining wood and smoldering embers.

"Don't just assume, 'I dumped water on it, so it's good,'" Heinz said.

Next, stir the fire remnants around to make sure all embers are extinguished. Then, apply more water, dirt or sand. A fire shouldn't be allowed to burn out on its own. Smoldering embers can reignite or spread and cause a larger fire.

"We want to prevent an escaped ember," Forman-Cook said. FS&H

Full house . . .

fire hazard?

Electrical safety when everyone's home

BY MELISSA J. RUMINSKI

Families have experienced a lot of togetherness this year. Adults working from home and kids e-learning – and people of all ages watching TV and playing video games – means a large number of electronic devices need to be plugged in or charged.

All of this "may present new electrical safety concerns in your home that have not existed before," Electrical Safety Foundation International President Brett Brenner says.

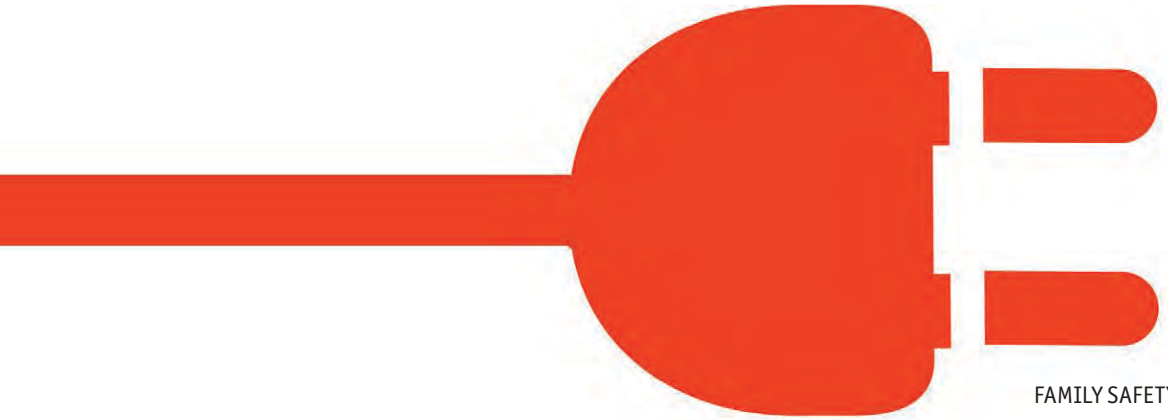
According to the ESFI, more than 35,000 residential fires occur every year – resulting in more than 500 deaths, 1,100 injuries and $1.4 billion in property damage. The institute offers simple steps you can take to prevent your home from becoming an electrical hazard.

- Don't overload outlets.
- Unplug appliances that aren't in use.
- Regularly inspect electrical and extension cords for damage.
- Use extension cords only on a temporary basis – they're not a permanent solution.
- Make sure cords don't become tripping hazards. Don't run them under rugs, carpets, doors or windows.
- Keep papers and other combustible items at least 3 feet away from space heaters and heat sources.
- Plug space heaters or fans directly into a wall outlet – not an extension cord or power strip.
- Make sure the bulbs in your lamps and light fixtures are the correct wattage.

The ESFI points out that the average home was built in 1977, and many simply aren't able to handle the collective electrical demands of today's devices and appliances. Here are some signs that your home's electrical system may be overloaded.

- Frequent blown fuses or tripped circuit breakers
- Lights that dim when other devices are turned on
- Buzzing sounds coming from outlets or switches
- Discoloration on outlets
- Appliances that seem underpowered

If you've noticed any of these, it's time to get in touch with a qualified electrician. Calling in the professionals when it's needed, along with making small changes and staying observant, will help keep everyone in the family safe – and plugged in – at home. FS&H



5 questions with A Veterinarian

Pets are part of the family. How can we help them stay healthy? San Diego-based veterinarian **Dr. Jessica Vogelsang** offers advice on caring for our beloved cats and dogs.

1 What are the most important things to know when adopting a pet from a shelter or breeder?

The most important thing to know – and you want to do this before you're looking a sweet animal in the face – is exactly what you're looking for in a pet. Do you want an active pet because you run? Do you want a pet that's a little more mellow? How much does shedding bother you? Does this pet have known medical issues you'll have to plan for?

A lot of the time, people get their hearts set on one specific breed, but then the individual pet isn't really a match for the family. Especially when you're looking to adopt. There are so many wonderful mixed-breed animals out there – be open to one who is maybe a little different than you were thinking. They may be just the perfect match for you.

2 If my pet isn't feeling well, how will I know? What signs should I watch for?

One of the biggest misconceptions people have about their pets being unwell is the idea that they will be very obvious in the signs. Sometimes they are – it's hard to mistake limping, for example, or a pet throwing up – but sometimes it's more subtle than that.

In general, any deviations from their normal behavior is something to at least keep an eye on. A pet who is not as peppy as usual may just be lounging because it's hot outside, or maybe your dog or cat truly doesn't feel well. A decrease in appetite may be normal for a picky eater but a cause for concern with a Labrador who never turns down a bite. You're the expert on what constitutes normal for your pet – if something's off, let your vet know.

3 How often do pets need to go to the vet?

Once a year is the maximum amount of time you want to go by for healthy pets with no medical concerns. For pets with medical conditions or those who are seniors, it may be closer to every six months or less.

4 Should I worry about my cat or dog catching COVID-19?

A small number of pets (and a couple of zoo tigers) have tested positive for COVID-19 after their owners tested positive. As far as we know, it's not very common and those pets don't seem to experience severity of disease the way humans do. We also don't know of any cases of pets transmitting the coronavirus to their owners.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has the most current information for pet owners at *cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/pets.html*. If you're diagnosed with COVID-19, the recommendation is to quarantine yourself from your pets the same way you would other healthy family members, but we believe the overall risk to household pets is low. Thank goodness!

5 What's one thing you wish all pet owners knew?

Just one? I wish more owners knew that when it's time to say goodbye to their beloved pets, a whole new subspecialty of veterinarians offer palliative and end-of-life care, usually provided in the client's home. These veterinarians are trained in keeping pets comfortable and helping families through these challenging transitions, and they can make such a difference. FS&H

kids page

Sam the Safety Dog says...

The NSC Safety Dog, Sam, is here to talk about safety with kids like you! This time, Sam has a special message about phones:

"Memorize the phone number of at least one person who takes care of you – like your mom, dad or a grandparent. That way, you'll know who to call if you get lost."

School ... from home?

If you'll be e-learning this school year, make a workspace that's all yours! Find a quiet corner to set up your desk. Make it special by hanging up some pictures of your friends or art projects you did!

Rainbow dinner game

Do you "eat the rainbow"? That means eating lots of different-colored fruits and veggies to stay healthy! Check out p. 12 to learn more. Then, play this game at dinner to help you keep track of the fruits and veggies you're eating.

Step 1:

Draw a rainbow on a sheet of paper and bring it to the dinner table with you.

Step 2:

Look for foods on the table that match each color of your rainbow. Write down which colors you're missing.

Step 3:

Make a list of fruits and veggies that would fill in the missing colors. Add them to the family shopping list.

Step 4:

Share your rainbow with your friends!

Source: Whole Kids Foundation

Photos: franckreporter/iStockphoto; BraunS/iStockphoto

test your memory

TAKE THE QUIZ

Take our quiz about information contained in this issue of *Family Safety & Health*.

1 **True or False:** Women are more likely than men to develop multiple sclerosis.

2 An estimated ___ adults in the United States serve as a family caregiver to another adult or a child with special needs.

a) 21 million
b) 38 million
c) 46 million
d) 53 million

5 questions with
A Veterinarian

3 Healthy pets with no medical concerns should be taken to the veterinarian at least once every:

a) 6 months
b) 9 months
c) 12 months
d) 18 months

4 If you're digging a fire pit, use small rocks to build a ___ "safety zone" around it.

a) 2-foot
b) 3-foot
c) 4-foot
d) 5-foot

5 Fruits and vegetables rich in ___ color contain the antioxidants lycopene and ellagic acid, which may help prevent heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

a) Red
b) Yellow
c) Green
d) Orange

6 A passenger vehicle traveling 55 mph will need ___ feet to come to a complete stop – *if* the driver is able to react and press the brake pedal within 1.5 seconds.

a) 65
b) 165
c) 265
d) 365

7 **True or False:** If you can carry on a conversation while exercising, you're working out at a manageable intensity.

8 In 2018, cooking caused how many fire-related injuries?

a) 1,200
b) 2,000
c) 2,400
d) 3,100

9 **True or False:** Most older homes (those built before 1977) are able to handle the collective electrical demands of today's devices and appliances.

10 After you've spent time outdoors in grassy, brushy or wooded areas, put the clothes you wore in the dryer on high heat for ___ minutes to kill ticks.

a) 5
b) 10
c) 15
d) 20

Email comments or topics you'd like to read about to ***fsh@nsc.org***.

Commandant of the Marine Corps
Safety Division

While COVID-19 and quarantine have made homebodies of us all, many have turned to do-it-yourself (DIY) projects to keep busy around the house. It can be both challenging and rewarding to tackle projects yourself, and these days you can find detailed instructions for how to do almost anything on a website or in a YouTube video.

Before jumping into your next DIY, make sure you're planning ahead and taking the necessary precautions to work through your next project safely.

AUTOMOTIVE PROJECTS

Issues and injuries are fairly easy to run into when doing your own automotive repair if you're not taking all the necessary precautions and creating the right environment to work.

Dress for Success. Remove any jewelry, tie longer hair back, and avoid wearing loose-hanging fabric. Always keep gloves, safety goggles/eye protection, and proper respiratory protection on hand to protect your hands, face, and lungs.

Allow Open Airflow. If working in a garage, keep the garage door open to minimize the buildup of fumes that come from gasoline, coolant, or even chemical cleansers. Not only can the build up of fumes make you dizzy or sick, they can also be flammable.

Keep It Stable. Most automotive projects require jacking up your car. Make sure your jack has proper placement (refer to the owner's manual for your car), use your e-brake and place blocks behind your tires. NEVER use a hydraulic jack as a jack stand—they are only meant to temporarily raise your vehicle in order to place jack stands—the hydraulics can fail at the most inopportune times.

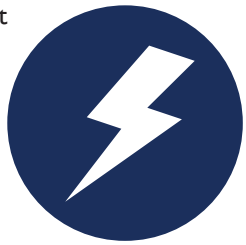
Use the Buddy System. While working on your car might be your alone time, always let someone know so that they can occasionally check on you or respond in the event of an emergency.

CLEANING PROJECTS

Familiarize yourself with your cleaning products (reading labels and manufacturer recommendations) before beginning cleaning projects, as combining certain products can create toxic and dangerous reactions. Here's a list of a few of the cleaning products you should never, ever mix:

- Hydrogen Peroxide + Vinegar
- Ammonia + Bleach
- Vinegar + Bleach
- Rubbing alcohol + Bleach
- Baking Soda + Vinegar
- Detergents + Disinfectants
- Drain Cleaner + (Different) Drain Cleaner

ELECTRICAL PROJECTS



This is one area where it's advised to start small for safety's sake and lean on professionals if you're not sure what you're doing. Take the following precautions to heart before beginning any electrical DIY projects.

The safest thing you can do is kill the power. Turning off the breaker to the circuit you'll be working on is priority #1. Once done, confirm the circuit is free from electrical energy by testing it with a voltage tester. Never assume anything, test and confirm first.

Make sure you are insulated. Limit your electrical conductivity by using tools insulated with rubber handles, wear rubber-soled shoes, only work in and on dry surfaces, and remove all jewelry and electronics from your body.

Have the appropriate tools. Electrical work will require you to have a few tools to stay safe: screwdrivers, wire cutters and strippers, pliers, a cable detector, and a voltage tester. Keep them well-maintained and replace immediately once they begin to wear out.

Make good use of a cable detector. One of the most common electrical errors that occur in DIY projects is accidentally drilling, screwing, and nailing metal objects into electrical cables hidden in the wall. A high-end cable detector will help you identify wires early enough to avoid the risk of electric shock.

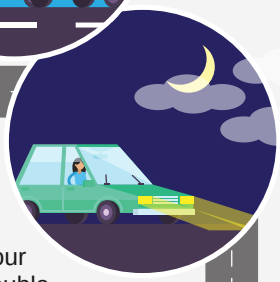
Pay attention to your circuit breaker after the job is done. Once you've finished your DIY project, you'll need to restore power again. Flipping the circuit breaker will help you gauge whether everything works properly. If the circuit breaker trips when you turn it back on (i.e., if it flips off or won't stay on), do not force it and do not turn it back on. It implies there's a shortage somewhere in your wiring, so don't take any chances. Seek the guidance of a professional electrician instead.

What to Do When Your Vehicle Breaks Down?

Pull off the road. On most roads, you should exit onto the far right shoulder, as far off the road as possible while remaining on level ground.

If you are driving on an interstate or multiple-lane highway with medians, make every attempt to pull to the right shoulder. The left shoulder may be used as a last resort or if it appears safer than merging to the right.

If the left shoulder must be used, place the vehicle as far away from traffic as possible.

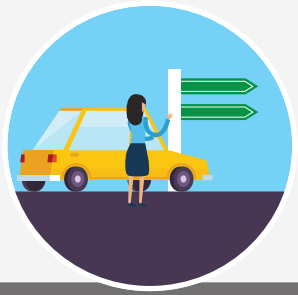


If you get out of your vehicle, proceed carefully and watch for oncoming traffic, especially at night or in bad weather, when visibility is limited.

Never stand behind or directly in front of your vehicle. Other roadway users may have trouble seeing you, and you could be struck by another vehicle.

What if you CANNOT pull off the road?

If your vehicle loses power and is inoperable, switch on safety/emergency flashers. Do not risk personal injury by attempting to push it to a safe location.



If you cannot get your vehicle to a location away from traffic, or if you are uncertain about your safety and think your car may get struck from behind, do not stay in your vehicle.
Park on the right side of the road, and exit through the passenger door.

https://navalsafetycenter.navy.mil