Family & Community Health "Connections" in Taylor County

HOLIDAY SAFETY!

The holiday season is often a time for celebrations and sharing gifts. While you're preparing for the holidays and ticking items off of your wish list, remember that one of the best things you can bring home to your loved ones is the gift of safety.

KNOW THE COMMON HOLIDAY HAZARDS

Whether you are staying home or traveling to be with family this holiday season, you must be on the lookout for safety risks. From poor weather and cold temperatures to outdoor decorating, this season can be more dangerous than you'd think. Fortunately, the more you understand and prepare for these dangers, the safer your holidays will be.

Keep hazards out of reach: Poisonous plants, such as some poinsettias, should be placed out of reach of children and pets. Home fires are a common holiday hazard. Candles should be kept away from anything that can catch fire, such as curtains and napkins, and placed on a stable surface where they won't be knocked over. You should also remember to keep trees and wreaths away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources.

Plan ahead: Make sure everyone arrives home safely. If you attend a party or gathering, always designate a sober driver before the event and make sure your guests do the same if you are hosting. To prevent family and friends from getting sick, practice food safety when preparing meals. Always wash your hands, utensils, sink and anything else that touches raw meat. In the days after a meal, remember to reheat all leftovers to at least 165˚ F (74˚ C).

Everyone celebrates differently, so think through your own holiday traditions to find where the hazards are hiding. The holidays are busy enough, so planning for these dangers ahead of time can help ensure a safe season.

https://www.nsc.org/getmedia/35a90531-4006-4ac8-9b8f-4deb87905e38/holiday-safety-talk-combined.pdf.aspx

In this newsletter you can expect:

Decorate Safely

Decorating is one of the best ways to get in a holiday mood, but emergency departments see thousands of injuries involving holiday decorating every season.

When decorating, follow these tips from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission:

- Keep potentially poisonous plants – mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry, and amaryllis – away from children
- If using an artificial tree, check that it is labeled "fire resistant"
- If using a live tree, cut off about 2 inches of the trunk to expose fresh wood for better water absorption, remember to water it, and remove it from your home when it is dry
- Place your tree at least 3 feet away from fireplaces, radiators, and other heat sources, making certain not to block doorways
- Avoid placing breakable ornaments or ones with small, detachable parts on lower tree branches where small children can reach them
- Only use indoor lights indoors and outdoor lights outdoors, and choose the right ladder for the task when hanging lights
- Replace light sets that have broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections
- Follow the package directions on the number of light sets that can be plugged into one socket
- Never nail, tack, or stress wiring when hanging lights, and keep plugs off the ground away from puddles and snow
- Turn off all lights and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house

https://www.nsc.org/community-safety/safety-topics/seasonal-safety/winter-safety/holiday

New Year's Eve Safety Tips

Plan a ride in advance
On average, driving accidents rise during the holidays, so it's crucial to have a safe ride on a night when so many people are out and about. Don't assume you'll be able to hail a cab. Know your options in advance and decide whether you'll take public transportation, use a ridesharing service or carpool with your friends.

Plan for guests' safety
If you're hosting a party, you'll want to be sure your guests get home safely. One option might be to hire a driver for the evening to provide people a way to get home. Stop serving alcohol at least one hour before the party ends, provide additional food or snacks and ensure that guests do not drive after drinking.

Make a plan with your kids
Set a reasonable curfew with your kids for their New Year's Eve festivities. If they're old enough to drive, be sure they understand the dangers of driving on the holiday. Encourage them to stay in one location instead of hopping from party to party. Discuss dangers of driving distractions and how to avoid them. A teen passenger and teens driving with friends face a higher safety risk than teens driving alone.

Take care of your pets
New Year's Eve can cause high anxiety in pets. Keep them safe in the house and comfortable by drowning out loud outside sounds. If your pet has a history of high anxiety, consider consulting your vet for anxiety medication.

Avoid leaving your car overnight
New Year's Day is the most active holiday for car thefts. If you must leave your car somewhere overnight, be sure it's locked and try to pick it up as early as possible the next day. If you do decide to drive home, let someone know when you leave and when you arrive safely at home.

www.statefarm.com/simple-insights/family/new-years-eve-safety-tips

Making SAFE Homemade Egg Nog

Is it time to update your eggnog recipes to avoid the risk of foodborne illness? Refrigerated eggs with clean, uncracked shells can still be contaminated with Salmonella bacteria.

Eggs must be cooked to 160°F to kill bacteria, such as Salmonella, that may be present. If your eggnog recipe calls for raw eggs, it may not be safe. Adding alcohol inhibits bacterial growth, but it cannot be relied upon to kill bacteria.

Source: Making homemade egg nog that's safe | UMN Extension

Use pasteurized eggs for eggnog

Eggnog may be safely made at home by using whole, liquid or pasteurized eggs. Pasteurized eggs are found next to regular eggs at the store. Egg substitutes can also be used. These products have also been pasteurized. Using a pasteurized product means that no further cooking is necessary.

If egg whites are needed, use pasteurized eggs

If a recipe calls for folding raw, beaten egg whites into the eggnog, use pasteurized eggs. It has not been proven that raw egg whites are free of Salmonella bacteria.

If you purchase eggnog from your local grocery store, the eggnog has been prepared with pasteurized eggs. You do not need to cook it.

Cook regular egg mixture to 160°F

If using regular eggs that have not been pasteurized use a recipe in which you cook the egg mixture to 160℉. At this temperature, the egg mixture thickens enough to coat a spoon. Follow the recipe carefully. Refrigerate it at once. When refrigerating a large amount of cooked eggnog, divide it into several shallow containers. Then it will cool quickly.

Who's at risk?

Salmonella and the resulting foodborne illness can affect anyone but its especially risky for some people. This includes senior citizens, pregnant women and very young children. People with weakened immune systems who suffer from chronic illnesses such as cancer, diabetes, liver disease and AIDS are also at risk. **So be particularly careful when serving eggnog to those individuals.**

Holidays are a fun but hectic time. By updating your eggnog recipes for safety, you'll have one less thing to worry about.

Homemade Holiday Eggnog

Ingredients:
1 quart of 2% milk
6 eggs
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup whipped cream, whipped
Ground nutmeg

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Directions:
Heat milk in a large saucepan until hot (do not boil or scald). While milk is heating, beat together eggs and salt in a large bowl, gradually adding the sugar. Gradually add the hot milk mixture to the egg mixture while continually stirring. Transfer the mixture back to the large saucepan and cook on medium-low heat. Stir constantly with a whisk until the mixture thickens and just coats a spoon. The food thermometer should register 160 degrees Fahrenheit. Stir in vanilla. Cool quickly by setting the pan in a bowl of ice or cold water and stir for about 10 minutes. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled, several hours or overnight. Pour into a bowl or pitcher. Fold in whipping cream. Dust with ground nutmeg and enjoy!

Calories: 135 per one-half cup.
Yield: 2 quarts

Source: Making safe eggnog - MSU Extension

Taylor EEA News

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at 11:00 AM

Christmas Party @

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Family & Community Health "*Connections*" is provided by the following Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Family & Community Health Agents:

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