

Safe and snug: Avoid heater and fireplace dangers while warming your home

Banner Health safety experts give heater and fireplace safety tips

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PHOENIX (Nov. 20, 2018) -- With our recent rainy days and nights, we're all thinking about turning on our heaters or making a fire but it's important we take certain precautions to keep our home and families safe, warn Banner Health safety experts.

“This time of year, around the holidays or when it is getting colder, people are using their fireplaces and using their space heaters and they do catch on fire because people are not watching,” says Tracey Fejt, trauma prevention coordinator at Banner Children's.

[SOT/voice/high-res video of Fejt talking about safety](#)

“There is a high risk of fire with those and you really have to be careful with them.” (Fejt's name is pronounced “fate”) Fejt helps manage trauma-prevention efforts at Cardon Children's Medical Center, Banner - University Medical Center Phoenix and Banner Thunderbird Medical Center.

Space heaters, which are used as alternative to centralized heating, are the equipment most often involved in home-heating equipment fires, figuring in more than 40 percent of home fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association, a national nonprofit safety organization.

Electric space heaters should only be used on flat, steady surfaces and should be three feet away from anything that can catch on fire, Fejt says. They should be plugged directly into the wall socket; people shouldn't use them with extension cords or power strips.

They must also be turned off when people leave the room or the house.

Fireplace safety tips include:

- **Flue open?** Remember to check to see that the flue is open.
- **Be careful with “fire salts,”** which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.
- **Be screened:** Always use a screen in front of the fireplace to protect against flying sparks.
- **Safe start:** Never use gasoline or any other flammable liquids to start a fire.
- **Right wood:** Use only seasoned and dried wood.
- **Stick around:** Never leave the fire unattended or let it smolder.

About Banner Health

Headquartered in Arizona, Banner Health is one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country. The system owns and operates 28 acute-care hospitals, Banner Health Network, Banner - University Medicine, academic and employed physician groups, long-term care centers, outpatient surgery centers and an array of other services; including Banner Urgent Care, family clinics, home care and hospice services, pharmacies and a nursing registry. Banner Health is in six states: Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada and Wyoming. For more information, visit www.BannerHealth.com.

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