

Hazardous holiday: Thanksgiving feasting can mean a trip to Emergency department

Burns from fryers, stoves to overeating cases treated at Banner Health EDs

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(Nov. 27, 2019) – Banner Health safety experts are offering some seasonal safety tips so a trip to the emergency department doesn't have to be part of your Thanksgiving-day menu.

Banner emergency departments care for a wide range of patients coming in as result of Thanksgiving festivities, everything from people with serious burns after deep frying turkeys in 350-degree oil to people complaining of stomach pain the day after Thanksgiving.

"We typically see burns whether it is from the oven or by touching a hot pan or whether we are using a deep-fat fryer for our turkey," says Tracey Fejt, trauma prevention coordinator.

"We can see anywhere from minor burns and redness to pain and blisters and even worse," she said.

Fejt (pronounced fate) helps coordinate trauma prevention work at Cardon Children's Medical Center, Banner – University Medical Center and Banner Thunderbird Medical Center.

[B-roll/sound on tape: Fejt's comments](#)

In fact, Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association, followed by Christmas and Christmas Eve. In 2017, U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 1,600 cooking fires.

Adding to those numbers are the use of deep fryers for turkeys, which some fire departments across the country have discouraged people from using.

"When we think of deep frying, just remember that oil and water, they don't mix, so if you are going to fry a turkey, make sure it is completely thawed," Fejt said.

"You don't want any frozen parts because when you put that into the boiling pot, it is going to cause that oil to pop and remember you have an open flame underneath there and then you are going to have a fire."

With possible rain in the forecast for Thanksgiving, where to locate the fryer becomes an issue because it shouldn't be used indoors, Fejt said.

"Fryers need to be located at least ten feet away from anything flammable," she says.

Other pointers when it comes to the location of the fryer:

- Fryer should be placed on a flat, even, non-wooden surface.
- Kids and pets need to be kept away from the fryer full of boiling oil.
- Fryer should be in a spot where someone can watch it, even once the frying is done, since the oil can remain hot for hours. "You don't set it out and walk away from it," Fejt said.
- People doing the frying should wear safety goggles, thermal oven mitts and long sleeves.

If you are cooking indoors, also think about safety to prevent burns. Make sure pot handles are turned back and use the back burners as much as possible to prevent children from being accidentally burned, Fejt says.

Adults should use oven mitts instead of hot pads for more protection in dealing with hot dishes, she added.

It's not just burns that bring people to the emergency departments on the four-day weekend. There's a lot of tummy trouble the day after Thanksgiving, Fejt says.

“ You don't want any frozen parts because when you put that into the boiling pot, it is going to cause that oil to pop and remember you have an open flame underneath there and then you are going to have a fire. ”

“You are eating a lot differently than you would normally eat, so we typically see people complaining of pain in their stomach, or higher up on their abdomen, possibly with their gallbladder.”

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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