



Jeb Bush
Governor

M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.
Secretary, Department of Health

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Wednesday, November 15, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
Jeannine Mallory, Public Information Officer
PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
727-824-6908 (media only)

Tips for Parents **Remember Kitchen Safety this Holiday Season**

As the busy holiday season approaches, the Pinellas County Health Department reminds you to check your kitchen for preventable hazards and to supervise children at all times in the kitchen.

It's important to have locks on any cabinets a small child can reach, to keep the cabinets closed and locked and to store hazardous substances out of reach. But that's not enough. The most important safety precaution in the kitchen is constant, close and attentive *supervision*. Simply being in the same room as a child is not necessarily supervising. An actively supervised child is in sight – and in reach – at all times.

Burns – from spills, steam, hot surfaces and flame – can be especially devastating. Because young children have thinner skin than adults do, they burn more severely and at lower temperatures. Scald burns from hot liquid or steam are the most common type of burns among children age four and under. A child will suffer a full-thickness burn (third-degree) after just three seconds of exposure to 140-degree water, and will need surgery and skin grafts as a result.

The Pinellas County Health Department recommends these precautions against kitchen injuries:

- Never leave a hot stove unattended. (Unattended food on the stove is the number one cause of home fires.)
- Never hold a child while cooking or carrying hot items.
- Use back burners whenever possible, and turn all pot handles toward the back of the stove.
- Don't allow loose-fitting clothing around the cooking area in the kitchen.
- Keep hot foods and liquids away from the edges of counters and tables.
- Be especially careful about tablecloths – children can easily pull hot dishes down onto themselves.

Children who can follow directions may be ready to help in the kitchen with tasks that do not involve knives, appliances or heat. Don't give children knives or let them handle anything hot until they have shown the maturity and coordination to do it safely. Some children mature faster than others do, so it's up to parents to use good judgment about a child's ability to help in the kitchen.

Visit www.usasafekids.org for more about kitchen safety and burn prevention.

###

The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of our community through public and private partnerships in an environment that respects diversity. www.PinellasHealth.com