Focus on Fire Safety This Winter

Most residential fires occur during the winter months. Here are some fire safety tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- Never leave food unattended on a stove.
- Keep cooking areas free of flammable objects (e.g., potholders and towels).
- Avoid wearing clothing with long, loose-fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Never place portable space heaters near flammable materials (e.g., curtains or bedspreads).
- Keep all matches and lighters out of reach of children. Store them up high, preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Install smoke alarms on every floor of the home, including the basement, and particularly near rooms in which people sleep.
- Use long-life smoke alarms with lithium-powered batteries and hush buttons, which allow you to stop false alarms quickly. If long-life alarms are not available, use regular alarms, and replace the batteries annually.
- Test all smoke alarms every month to ensure that they work properly.
- Devise a family fire escape plan and practice it every 6 months. Describe at least 2 different ways of escape from each room. Designate a safe place in front of the home for family members to meet after escaping a fire.
- If possible, install or retrofit fire sprinklers into your home.

Especially for the Holidays…

- Inspect holiday lights before use. Discard any with frayed wires, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, or excessive wear.
- Turn off your lights before you leave home.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets. Don’t link more than 3 light strands unless the directions indicate it is safe to do so.
- Never leave lit candles unattended or put candles on a Christmas tree. Place lit menorahs or kinaras away from vents or flammable materials.
- If you use a real Christmas tree, make sure it is freshly cut and that it is kept in water at all times. Needles on fresh trees should be green and should not fall off easily. Don’t put your tree up too early or leave it up longer than 2 weeks.
- If you use an artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.
- Place your Christmas tree in a safe place, away from heat sources such as a fireplace or heat vent.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2009.

Turn Off the TV and Get Stronger!

Obesity isn’t the only negative side effect of excessive television watching. A new Finnish study suggests that young adults who tune in to 2 hours or more of TV a day have low levels of muscular fitness regardless of their overall physical activity level.

“To our knowledge, our study is the first to report such an association,” said researcher Tuija Tammelin. “It’s possible that some young adults are doing basic levels of aerobic physical activity, but leaving out the important strength-training element.”

The problem of sedentary screen time (e.g., TV, movies, or computer activity), may be further magnified for American adults who, according to Nielsen ratings, watch approximately 142 hours of television a month on average, equal to more than 4 hours a day.

Instead of watching TV or being on the computer all evening, carve out 15-30 minutes to do strengthening exercises.

When you do watch TV, do pushups and curl-ups during commercials.

Or try jump roping and lifting weights while watching movies.

Q: I am allergic to dairy. How can I get enough calcium?

A: Go to www.wellsource.info/wn/ask-calcium.pdf to read the answer from Don Hall, DrPH, CHES. To ask your question, email: well@wellsource.com, subject line: Ask the Wellness Doctor. Emails with any other subject line will be directed to the spam folder.

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Health Challenge: “Stay Fit During the Holidays” available at: www.wellsource.info/wn/hc-StayFit.pdf. The days from Thanksgiving through New Year’s present a special challenge for people trying to maintain a healthful lifestyle. This month, make smart food choices and stay physically active – at least 30 minutes daily.