



## Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

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### **52 Weeks of Public Health - Frying a Turkey?**

#### **Kettle Cookers Can Be Dangerous; Caution is Advised**

**FRANKFORT, KY. (Nov. 22, 2017)** – Frying a turkey can be a fun and tasty alternative to the traditional baked dishes of the holidays. As many start to plan menus, the Department for Public Health (DPH), within the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), wants to remind Kentuckians that fryers – multi-use kettles used for deep frying foods - also can be dangerous when not handled with care. The safety promotion is part of DPH's ongoing 52 Weeks of Public Health Campaign.

Since 2002, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has tracked more than 168 turkey-fryer related fire, burn, explosion or CO poisoning incidents, including 672 injuries and \$8 million in property damage. Hazard scenarios have varied from house fires, ignition of oil used in the fryers themselves, and burn-causing oil splashes.

“Turkey fryers have steadily grown in popularity over the past two decades, but they pose some risk if not used properly,” said Dr. Jeffrey Howard, acting commissioner for DPH. “By following a few guidelines and using precaution, adverse circumstances can be avoided. We want all Kentuckians to have a happy and safe holiday season and we

ask that everyone follow some simple safety guidelines when cooking – or frying – your holiday food.”

According to the CPSC, the majority of reported turkey fryer incidents occurred while the oil was being heated, prior to adding turkey. For this reason, it is very important that consumers monitor the temperature of oil closely. If any smoke at all is noticed coming from heating a pot of oil, the burner should be turned off immediately because the oil is overheated.

Consumers who choose to fry turkeys always should remember to keep the fryer in full view while the burner is on and to place the fryer in open area away from walls, fences or other structures. Fryers should be stored outside and never used under a garage, breezeway, carport or any other structure that can catch fire.

To avoid burns, food should be raised and lowered slowly and bare skin should be covered. It's also important to check the oil temperature frequently. If the oil should begin to smoke, the gas supply should be turned off immediately.

If a fire occurs, immediately call 911. Do not attempt to extinguish fire with water.

Here's a look at the best way to avoid accidents or injuries from turkey fryers this holiday season;

- Make sure there is at least two feet of space between the propane tank and fryer burner.
- Place the gas tank and fryer so that wind blows heat of the fryer away from tank.
- Center the pot over the burner on the cooker.
- Completely thaw (USDA says 24 hours for every four to five pounds) and dry turkey before cooking. Partially frozen and/or wet turkeys can produce excessive hot oil splatter when added to the oil.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions to determine the proper amount of oil to add. If those are not available:

- Place turkey in pot.
- Fill with water until the turkey is covered by about one-half inch of water.
- Remove and dry turkey.
- Mark the water level. Dump water, dry the pot, and fill with oil to the marked level.

## **52 Weeks of Public Health**

Throughout the 52 Weeks of Public Health Campaign, DPH will highlight the important work of public health professionals as well as spread awareness about statewide health issues. Additional information about the campaign is available on the [DPH website](#) as well as the [CHFS Facebook page](#) where Kentuckians are encouraged to like and share public health awareness posts.

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*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*