

Script – Broadcast - Staying safe around the grill

INTRO

Summer is a time for being outdoors, grilling your favorite foods for various social gatherings. While your guests will be lining up for mouth-watering burgers and brats, medical experts say it's important to play it safe before igniting that first flame.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), nearly 20,000 people are treated every year in emergency departments due to injuries involving grills. More than 10,500 home fires are started by grills each year. July is the peak month for grill fires, followed by June, May and August.

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The first thing is to make sure your gas grill is ready. If the grill is not primed correctly, it could lead up to a buildup of gas that can explode. Another concern is when people use lighter fluid with charcoal. Some people like to pour too much lighter fluid for a good burn which can quickly create flash burns and cause significant burns.

Dr. Stathis Poulakidas is the medial director for the Burn Unit at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center in Rockford, Il. He treats many different injuries throughout the summer – from burns to eyelashes and eyebrows – to significant burns that require skin grafting. He says it's important to keep the grill outdoors and away from potential hazards.

((SOT))

Dr. Stathis (STAY-THIS) Poulakidas (POLE-UH-KEEDAS), medical director, OSF Saint Anthony Medical Center Burn Unit, Rockford, IL.

"Garages are a very dangerous place. You think 'I'm going to get out of the rain, or I'll be able to grill year-round' and it's going to be warm and safe. But you have turpentine, gasoline, all different types of gas products in the garage that you might use for your lawn mowers or weed eaters." (:16)

If you get lighter fluid on your skin, move away from the grill, and wash your hands and arms to ensure that when you do light the flame it doesn't catch fire to your arms as well. Dr. Poulakidas also recommends investing in a fire extinguisher and avoiding alcohol while grilling.

Dr. Poulakidas is looking forward to grilling this summer, too. He says the best way for everyone to enjoy the summer with family and friends is to play it smart around the grill and avoid being one of the thousands of people who end up in the hospital.

TAG

Grilling Safety tips

- Propane and charcoal grills should only be used outdoors
- The grills should be placed away from the home and never in the garage
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area
- Avoid using wire brushes to clean the grill. Use nylon scrapers or wool brushes instead
- Keep the grill clean by removing grease or fat build-up from the grills and trays below
- Never leave the grill unattended
- Always make sure the gas grill lid is open before lighting it