

Kitchen Safety

Use Knives Safely

A good knife is essential in any kitchen but must be handled carefully. These safety tips for handling knives can reduce your chance of injury.

Concentrate on what you are doing when using a knife. Do not engage in conversation when using knives.

Always use sharp knives. Dull blades cause more accidents because they are harder to work with and require more pressure.

Choose the correct size knife and appropriate blade for the job. Using a small knife for a task that requires a chef's knife can be dangerous.

Hold knives securely. When using a chef's knife, grip the top of the blade firmly between your thumb and forefinger. Do not rest your thumb or finger on the spine of knife or hold the knife only by the handle.

Keep knife handles free of grease or other slippery substances. Clean knives are safer to use and help prevent cross-contamination.

Keep knives away from the edge of the counter to lessen the chance of being knocked off. Step out of the way if a knife is dropped. Never try to catch a falling knife or blade.

Use knives for their intended purpose. Do not use knives as can openers, screwdrivers, staple removers, or box cutters.

Wash knives immediately after use. Do not leave knives in a sink of soapy water where they cannot be seen. Keep the sharp edge of the knife away from you when washing.

Store knives in a wooden block or in a drawer so they are out of reach of children.





Cutting Safety Tips:

Carry a knife by the handle with the tip down and the blade turned away from your body.

Place a damp cloth under the cutting board to prevent it from sliding.

Keep the point of the knife on the cutting board while you chop.

Cut downward and away from your body.

Use your free hand to firmly hold the food item against the cutting board, making sure fingers are out of the way of any slips that might occur.

Source: National Food Service Management Institute. (2008). *Growing your professional skills: Competencies, knowledge, and skills for successful school nutrition assistants*. University, MS: Author.

Janie Burney, PhD, RD, Professor, Family and Consumer Sciences