

# Ask Elinor

## Home Safety Surprises And Suggestions

by Elinor Ginzler

(NAPSA)—Any time of year can be the right time to take a look around your home and find ways to make it safer for you and your family.

For example, simple home maintenance can avert a number of potential problems. Cleaning lint filters in the clothes dryer before every load and cleaning the dryer vent line each year can prevent dryer fires. Shockingly, there are more than



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15,000 dryer-related fires each year.

Placing a barbecue grill too close to the house can be another way to cook up accidents. It's estimated that 6,500 barbecue grill fires cause as much as \$27 million in property losses each year.

Some injuries can be prevented by just choosing a different tool for a difficult task. Consider using a can opener instead of a kitchen knife the next time you open those frustrating anti-theft plastic clamshell packages. And did you know that a sharp knife is safer than a dull knife? A dull blade leads to slips.

AARP has compiled a list of 30 home safety facts and tips that shine a light on the simple things that can help make homes safer and more user friendly.

Did you know that:

- 86,000 people fall each year because of their pets?

- Power-mower injuries cause 80,000 hospital visits each year?

- Poison ivy is getting more potent and harder to identify?

- More people are injured using hand tools than power tools?

Many of these injuries can be prevented with simple fixes that take just moments but rarely make it to our to-do lists.

Consider these small tasks:

- Moving the grill 10 feet from the house or shrubs can help protect you from a larger fire if the grill tips or the fire flares.

- Feeding the cat before making dinner can stop it from milling around the kitchen when you're cooking. A baby gate can keep the dog out of the kitchen altogether.

- Most mower injuries are caused by stones or other things kicked out by mower blades moving at high speed. Clearing the yard of debris before mowing can help.

- Can't recognize poison ivy? The oil that causes people to react to poison ivy won't penetrate long sleeves and pants or vinyl work gloves.

By drawing attention to home-safety risks that are easy to overlook but not too hard to prevent, AARP hopes everyone can relax, knowing they will have a safer home all year round.

Learn more at [http://www.aarp.org//home-garden/housing/30\\_safety\\_tips.html](http://www.aarp.org//home-garden/housing/30_safety_tips.html) or call 888-OUR-AARP (888-687-2277).

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