

## If Fire Strikes

Knowing how to protect yourself during a fire emergency could save your life.

### **Test Doors Before You Open Them:**

Knocking or crouching at the door, reach up as high as you can and touch the door, the knob, and the space between the door and its frame with the back of your hand. If the door is cool, open it cautiously and continue along your escape route.

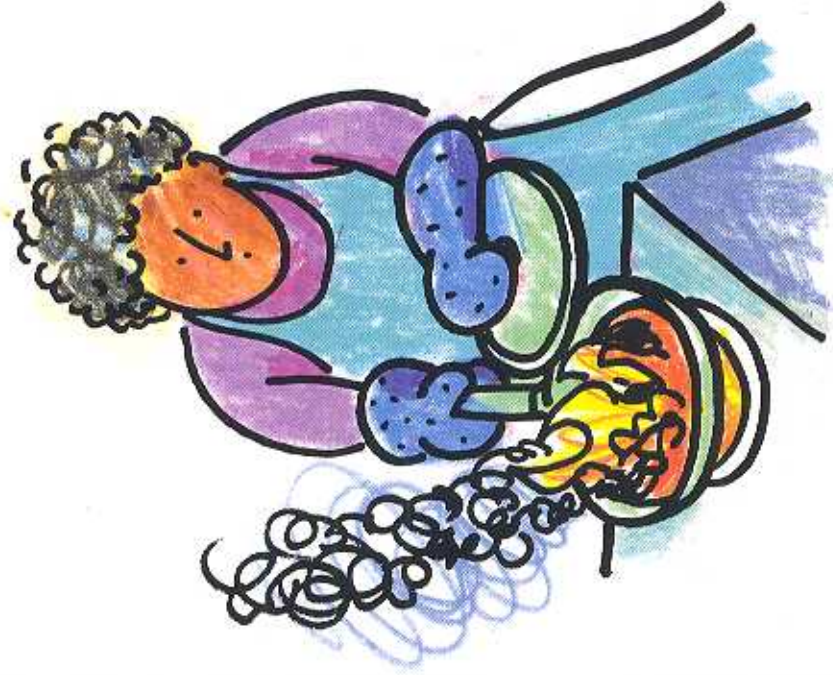
### **Crawl Low Under Smoke:**

If you encounter smoke using your primary exit use an alternative route. If you must exit through smoke, crouch or crawl. Heat and smoke rise; cleaner air will be 12 to 24 inches (30 to 60 cm.) above the floor. Leave the building as quickly as you can. Call the fire department from a neighbor's phone.

**Stop, Drop, and Roll:** If your clothing catches fire, stop where you are; drop gently to the floor or ground, cover your face with your hands to protect your face from flames, and roll over and over to smother the flames. If you cannot drop to the floor, smother the flames with a blanket or towel.

### **Smother a Grease Fire:**

If a pan of food catches fire, carefully slide a lid over it and turn off the burner.



# FIRE SAFETY TIPS FOR OLDER ADULTS



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## Protect Yourself

Prevention is the best way to keep your home safe from fire.

**Be Kitchen Wise:** Never leave cooking unattended. Wear clothes with tight-fitting sleeves when you cook. Always set a kitchen timer to remind you to turn off burners and the oven. Keep stove surfaces free of clutter and built-up grease.

**Be Smoker Wary:** Provide smokers with large, deep, non-tip ashtrays. Empty ashtrays often, wetting the contents before dumping them. Never smoke in bed or while drinking alcohol or while you are on medication that could make you drowsy or disoriented.

## Give Space Heaters Space:

Keep portable space heaters at least 3 feet (1 meter) from everything — including you. Just brushing against one could set your clothing on fire.

## Install Smoke Detectors:

Be sure to have smoke detectors outside all sleeping areas and on every level of your home, including the basement. Test your smoke detectors monthly, and change their batteries once a year. If you sleep in a room with the doors closed, install a smoke detector inside the room as well. If you are hearing-impaired, use tested and approved smoke detectors that trigger a strobe light.

## Plan Your Escape

**Know Two Ways Out:** Plan two escape routes from every room in your home. During a fire, smoke or flames may block an exit forcing you to use an alternate escape route.

## Know How to Unlock Doors and Windows:

Windows should open easily and fully to allow escape. Keep an easily found key by every locked or barred door. All security-barred windows needed for escape should be equipped with quick-release devices that every household member can operate. Practice emergency exit drills to identify and correct obstructions.

## Know All Building Exits:

If you live in an apartment building, count the number of doorways between your apartment and the two nearest exits. During a fire, you may have to escape in the dark. If your building has outside metal fire-escape stairs, ask your building's owner or landlord to show you how to use them.

No matter where you live, be familiar with all exits, including windows. If you have trouble with stairs, it may be best to sleep on the first floor.

**If You Are Trapped:** Remain calm. Close all doors between you and the smoke. If there is a phone in the room, call the fire department, and tell the dispatcher where you are trapped. Call the fire department even if you can see fire trucks

through your window. Stuff rags, towels, or clothing in the cracks around doors to keep smoke out. Wait at a window;

signal the fire fighters by waving a light-colored cloth or flashlight and wait to be rescued.

