Everyone looks forward to spending quality time with friends and family during grilling season. Learning to grill is also a rite of passage for many teenagers, and a chance for you and them to bond. By practicing good grill and fire safety, you can minimize risk and focus on having a good time. Here are some handy tips for you and your teen to handle your grill safely:

Where to grill

Keeping your grill away from your house and other structures is a great way to stay safe while you’re teaching your teens how to grill. Only 1% of home fires caused by grills occur on the lawn, so make sure it stays in the yard, on the deck or in your driveway.

Make sure the area surrounding the grill is clear of flammable items – or items that may melt at high temperatures. Get your teen involved by asking them to make sure the grill is on stable ground so you can avoid tipping. And once you get the fire going, leave the grill where it is. Moving it may cause the grill to fall over.

Charcoal vs. Gas

Whether you’re looking for the char-grilled flavor of food cooked on a charcoal grill or the convenience of cooking on a gas grill, there are things to consider when teaching your teen to use each one.

On a charcoal grill, go easy on the lighter fluid. It only takes a bit to get the fire started. And be sure to let the bricks cool completely before handling them or moving the grill.

Gas grills are usually quick and easy to light, but have a higher risk of fire or explosion. If you have trouble getting your gas grill to light, give it a couple of minutes to let the gas dissipate before trying again. And be sure to check your fuel line regularly to make sure it’s still intact.

Grilling basics

Whether it’s your first time grilling with your teen or you both already own “License to Grill” aprons, keep the following things in mind when you fire things up. Start your teens off slow when they’re first learning. Supervise them a few times and communicate good safety strategies.

Show them how to use the longer grilling tools to keep the flames out of reach. In addition to having a fire safety kit handy, fire extinguishers, boxes of baking soda and other fire-stoppers are helpful to have around just in case. But staying safe around the grill isn’t just about fire. Practicing good food safety and avoiding cross-contamination will ensure a good time is had by all.