

Holiday Safety



Seasonal Decorating Safety Tips

Holiday decorations are sure to brighten your holiday season this year. While decorations are something we all enjoy, it is important to handle them appropriately as they can contribute to unsafe situations. Here are some additional tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics to avoid accidents and injuries.

Artificial Trees	Look for the label "Fire Resistant."
Real Trees	Be sure your tree is fresh. A fresh tree is green with needles that are hard to pull from branches and do not break, and the trunk is sticky with resin. Remember that fresh trees need lots of water, every day.
Tree Placement	Avoid space near fireplaces, radiators or portable heaters. Do not block doorways.
Lights	Check all tree lights even if you have just purchased them. Be sure the entire strand works as it should before you put it on the tree. There should be no frayed wires, broken sockets or loose connections. Lights used outdoors should be certified for outdoor use. Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) to avoid potential shocks. Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house.
Tree Trimming	Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded materials are good choices, but should be avoided around pets. Avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, particularly in houses with small children.
Candles	Candles should not be placed near trees or other things that might easily catch fire. Use non-flammable holders, and be sure the candles won't easily be tipped over.
Gift Wrapping	After gifts are opened, be sure to remove all wrapping papers, bags, paper, ribbons and bows from tree and fireplace areas. These items can pose suffocation and choking hazards to small children.
Fireplace	Don't throw wrapping paper in the fireplace. This could cause a sudden increase in the flame.

Toy Safety

Choose toys that match the age, abilities, and interests of the child. Toys too advanced can pose choking hazards. Read all instructions completely before allowing a child to play with a new toy. Keep up to date on product recalls through the Consumer Product Safety Commission (www.cpsc.gov or 800-638-2752).

Do your own safety evaluation

- Is it durable? Can a piece be broken or bitten off? Is it color-fast?
- A good rule of thumb is, if it can pass through a toilet paper roll, it poses a choking hazard.

A few age-specific tips include

- Children under 3 shouldn't be given toys with parts less than 1.25 inches in diameter and 2.25 inches long due to choking hazards.
- Children under 8 can choke or suffocate on un-inflated or broken balloons. You should also remove strings and ribbons from toys for children in this age group.
- Children under 10 shouldn't be given toys that must be plugged into an electrical outlet due to a burn and electrical shock hazard.
- Pull toys with strings more than 12 inches long pose strangulation hazards for babies.
- Keep toys with button batteries or magnets away from small children.

Shopping Safety

- Be Alert! Be sure you are aware of your surroundings. Don't appear to be distracted or burdened by a large package or numerous packages.
- Place your wallet in your front pocket or an inside jacket pocket. Keep your handbag near to your body.
- Park in well-lit areas and lock your car. Lock any valuables in the trunk or hide them out of view within your car.
- Have your keys ready when walking to your vehicle. Inspect the perimeter and back seat of the car before getting in.

Home Safety

- Try to "break" into your house. Find the weak security points in your home, and fix them, before someone else finds them.
- Be vigilant in locking all of your windows and doors and setting your security system. They do no good if they're not used.
- Make it seem like you're home; leave a light and/or radio on.
- Close your blinds or window treatments. Don't showcase your belongings to potential thieves.
- Be careful with your garbage and recycling. You don't want anyone who goes by your house to know about all of your new purchases.
- Cut back your landscaping if it's over grown. You don't want to provide a hiding place for potential burglars.

Happy, Healthy Holidays

The holiday season often brings its own challenges to an already busy schedule for most of us. The Center for Disease Control gives the following suggestions for a safe and healthy holiday season for yourself and loved ones:

✓ Wash Your Hands Often

Washing your hands for 20 seconds using soap and warm running water prevents the spread of illness. If water and soap are unavailable, use an alcohol-based product.

✓ Stay Warm

Stay dry and dress warmly in several layers of loose-fitting, tightly woven clothing. Especially infants and older adults!

✓ Manage Stress

Use scheduling to avoid over-commitment and overspending. Work-life balance is critical during the holidays, and throughout the year.

✓ Travel Safely

No drinking and driving, minimize cell phone use, and buckle up every time you get in the car.

SafetyConnection: Holiday Safety

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