

PATIENT INFORMATION

Holiday Safety Tips

Pediatric & Adult Medicine, Inc.
13132 Newport Ave. #100
Tustin, CA 92780
714.565.7960 (tele)
714.565.7982 (fax)
www.pam4kids.com

The holidays are an exciting time of year for kids, and to help ensure they have a safe holiday season, here are some tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Consumer Product Safety Commission. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call us. We all hope you have a wonderful, happy and healthy holiday season.

Trees

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "Fire Resistant." Although this label does not mean the tree won't catch fire, it does indicate the tree will resist burning and should extinguish quickly.
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces, radiators or portable heaters. Because heated rooms dry live trees out rapidly, be sure to keep the stand filled with water. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.
- Cut a few inches off the trunk of your tree to expose the fresh wood. This allows for better water absorption and will help to keep your tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.
- Check all tree lights-even if you've just purchased them-before hanging them on your tree. Make sure all the bulbs work and that there are no frayed wires, broken sockets or loose connections.

Lights

- Never use electric lights on a metallic tree. The tree can become charged with electricity from faulty lights, and a person touching a branch could be electrocuted.
- Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.
- Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.

Decorations

- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children.
- Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other evergreens. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not be knocked down.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, keep trimmings with small removable parts out of the reach of children to avoid the child swallowing or inhaling small pieces, and avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a child to eat them.
- Wear gloves to avoid eye and skin irritation while decorating with spun glass "angel hair." Follow container directions carefully to avoid lung irritation while decorating with artificial snow sprays.

Toy Safety

- Follow recommended age ranges on toy packages. Toys that are too advanced could be a safety hazard for younger children.
- Before buying a toy or allowing your child to play with a toy that he has received as a gift, read the instructions carefully. If the toy is appropriate for your child, show him how to use it properly.
- Be careful of holiday gift wrapping, like bags, paper, ribbons and bows. These items can pose suffocation and choking hazards to a small child.
- Children under age 4 can choke on small parts contained in toys or games and balls with a diameter of one and three-quarters of an inch or less.
- Children under age 8 can choke or suffocate on uninflated or broken balloons. Remove strings and ribbons from toys before giving them to young children.
- Watch for pull toys with strings that are more than 12 inches in length. They could be a strangulation hazard for babies.

Outdoor Fun

- Make sure your child's gloves and shoes stay dry. If either becomes wet, change your child into a dry pair.
- Sledding on or into the roadway should be prohibited. Look for shallow slopes that are free of obstacles such as trees and fences.
- Cutting down your own tree for the holiday may start a wonderful family tradition. Young children can pick out the tree while an adult does the chopping or cutting.

Food Safety

- Bacteria are often present in raw foods. Fully cook meats and poultry, and thoroughly wash raw vegetables and fruits.
- Be sure to keep hot liquids and foods away from the edges of counters and tables, where they can be easily knocked over by a young child's exploring hands.
- Wash your hands frequently, and make sure your children do the same.
- Never put a spoon used to taste food back into food without washing it.
- Always keep raw foods and cooked foods separate, and use separate utensils when preparing them.
- Always thaw meat in the refrigerator, never on the countertop.
- Foods that require refrigeration should never be left at room temperature for more than two hours.

Happy Visiting

- Clean up immediately after a holiday party. A toddler could rise early and choke on leftover food or come in contact with alcohol or tobacco.
- Remember that the homes you visit may not be childproofed. Keep an eye out for danger spots.
- Keep a laminated list with all of the important phone numbers you or a baby-sitter are likely to need in case of an emergency. Include the police and fire department, your pediatrician and the poison control center.

- Ask your neighbor if they have a gun before sending your kids over to play. If the answer is yes, you need to make absolutely sure that all guns are stored unloaded and locked - ideally in a gun safe - with ammunition locked separately. Include the question along with other things you might normally discuss before sending your child to someone's house.

Fireplaces

- Use care with "fire salts," which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.
- Do not burn wrapping papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.