

## Tips for Preventing Injuries during the Holidays

The following tips—provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics, U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, National SAFE KIDS Campaign, and other safety organizations—can help you and your family have a safe holiday season.



### Deck the halls...safely.

- Place trees and other greenery away from fireplaces and radiators. Keep tree stands filled with water—dried out trees are a fire hazard.
- Check each set of tree lights for frayed wires, broken bulbs, and loose connections. Throw away damaged sets. Never string more than three sets of lights on an extension cord, and never run cords or strings of lights behind drapes or under carpets. Turn lights off when you go to bed or leave the house.
- Place lit candles away from decorations and drapes. Place candles out of children's reach and where pets can't knock them over. Blow out all candles before going to bed or leaving the house.
- If you have small children, avoid sharp or breakable decorations. Keep tinsel and other small trimmings out of children's reach. Avoid using decorations that look like candy or food—they may tempt a child to eat them.
- Use caution when decorating with spun-glass "angel hair" or "bubble lights." They can cause injury if they are swallowed. Only use spray snow that's labeled nontoxic.
- Keep holiday plants away from children and pets. Mistletoe, holly berries, and Christmas cactus are poisonous if swallowed. Poinsettias can cause stomach irritation in humans, and they can make pets very sick.



### Shop 'til you drop.

- Help keep your children safe while shopping.
  - Teach them to go to a store clerk or security guard if you get separated.
  - Keep children under age 4 in a stroller or supervise them closely.
  - If you place your child in a shopping cart, always use the safety belt. Stay close to the cart. Never let your child stand in or push a shopping cart.
- Don't be an easy victim for violent crime.
  - Stay alert at all times and pay attention to your surroundings. Don't leave children alone - in or around the car.
  - Park in a well-lit space away from decorative bushes. Lock your car, roll up the windows, hide packages in the trunk or under a blanket and check again to make sure no children are left alone in the car. Be especially alert in parking decks and underground garages.
  - Don't overload yourself with packages.
  - Have your car keys in hand before heading to the parking lot.
- Be careful when riding on escalators.
  - Make sure no one in your group has loose shoelaces, drawstrings, scarves, or mittens that could get trapped in the escalator. (continued ...→)

- Hold your child's hand, face forward, and keep feet away from the edge of the steps.
- Never bring strollers, carts, or walkers on an escalator.



### The joy of giving.

- Make sure the toys you give children are safe for them. Read package labels and follow age recommendations.
  - Do not give children under age 3 toys that contain small or metal parts or toys that break easily.
  - Avoid toys that shoot small objects into the air.
  - Avoid toys that make loud or shrill noises.
- Include helmets and other protective gear (such as elbow, knee, and wrist pads) when giving bicycles, skates, or skateboards.
- If you're considering buying your child a BB or pellet gun, make sure your child knows the proper way to use it. Supervise your children when they use these guns.
- Do not throw gift-wrappings in the fireplace. They can cause a flash fire. Throw away all toy packaging right away so it doesn't become a choking or suffocation hazard.
- Keep batteries away from children. They are toxic if swallowed.



### Over the river and through the woods...

- When you leave the house, turn off all tree lights and blow out all candles.
- Buckle your seatbelt every time you drive or ride in a car. Whether you're traveling by car or plane, make sure your child is buckled in a safety seat, booster seat, or seatbelt.
- Avoid driving in snowy or icy weather. If that's not possible, drive slowly. It takes longer to stop on wet or icy roads.
- Remember that homes you visit may not be child-proofed. Ask to move breakable or dangerous items out of children's reach. If the host's home has stairs, bring a safety gate.
- When staying overnight, bring outlet covers and check that cabinets are free of toxic items or have safety latches.



### Eat, drink, and be safe.

- When hosting a holiday party or feast, follow some basic safety tips to prevent injuries.
  - Turn handles of pots and pans on the stove inward so children can't reach them. Use the back burners, if possible.
  - Keep knives and other sharp utensils away from children.
  - Keep hot foods and drinks away from table and counter edges.
  - Never hold a child while you're carrying hot foods or drinks or while you're cooking.
- Offer plenty of nonalcoholic drink alternatives. Keep all drinks—alcoholic or not—away from children.
- Do not place candy, chocolates, or other treats within children's reach.
- Clean up right after a meal or party. Children can choke on leftover food or be exposed to alcohol or tobacco.
- Don't let any of your guests drive home if they've been drinking.

