

Holiday Safety Tips



Tips to help your family have a safe and happy holiday

The holiday season is a magical, festive time filled with fun for people of all ages. However, the very things that brighten the holidays also can pose a threat to children if not used properly.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, approximately 10,000 people are treated in hospital emergency rooms each year as a result of injuries related to holiday decorating. Additionally, there are more than 14,000 candle-related fires each year, resulting in about 170 deaths and \$350 million in property damage. Christmas trees also are involved in approximately 200 fires each year, resulting in 10 deaths and \$10 million in property loss.

Fortunately, these and other injuries can be avoided by taking a few standard precautions. Beverly Losman of Children's Healthcare of Atlanta and Safe Kids Georgia offers parents and caregivers the following tips for safeguarding their families from preventable holiday injuries:

- Decorate with children in mind. Do not put ornaments that have small parts or metal hooks, or look like food or candy, on the lower branches of a tree where small children can reach them. Trim protruding branches at or below a child's eye level, and keep lights out of reach.
- Never leave a decorative light display unattended. Inspect lights for exposed or frayed wires, loose connections and broken sockets. Do not overload extension cords or outlets and do not run an electrical cord under a rug.
- Natural Christmas trees always involve some risk of fire. To minimize the risk, get a fresh tree and keep it watered at all times. Do not put the tree near heat sources, such as candles, fireplaces or heat vents.
- Keep decorations and other items with sharp edges out of reach.
- Turn off decorative light displays and extinguish candles when you leave the room.
- Never allow infants and toddlers to use toys with small parts that could be choking hazards. If a part fits in a cardboard toilet paper tube, it is small enough to pose a choking risk to a child.
- Keep alcohol, including baking extracts, out of reach. Do not leave alcoholic drinks unattended.
- Do not burn Christmas tree branches, treated wood or wrapping paper in a home fireplace.
- Holly berries, mistletoe berries, poinsettias, amaryllis, boxwood, Christmas rose, Crown of Thorns, English ivy and Jerusalem cherry are all potentially harmful if eaten. Keep the Georgia Poison Center number, 800-222-1222, with other emergency numbers.

About Tips Provider:

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, a not-for-profit organization, is dedicated to making kids better today and healthier tomorrow. Our specialized care helps children get better faster and live healthier lives. Managing more than 850,000 patient visits annually at three hospitals and 24 neighborhood locations, Children's is the largest healthcare provider for children in Georgia and one of the largest pediatric clinical care providers in the country. Children's offers access to more than 60 pediatric specialties and programs and is ranked among the top children's hospitals in the country by U.S. News & World Report. With generous philanthropic and volunteer support, Children's has impacted the lives of children in Georgia, the United States and throughout the world. Visit www.choa.org for more information.