



Making the Holidays Safe

Family gatherings, special traditions, delicious treats — the holiday season may be the most wonderful time of the year, especially for kids. Unfortunately, for emergency room doctors it's also one of the busiest.

Learn how to protect your little ones from some common holiday dangers, so you and your family can enjoy a season that's happy and healthy.

Poisoning

- Mistletoe, holly, poinsettias, Jerusalem cherry plants, and other plants are commonly used as decorations during the holidays. Like many plants, these are considered potentially poisonous and should be kept out of the reach of kids. Symptoms of plant poisoning can include rashes, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. If you suspect that your child has eaten any part of a plant, immediately call your doctor or the National Poison Center: **(800) 222-1222**.
- "Bubble lights" containing methylene chloride can be poisonous if a child drinks the fluid from more than one light (even if labeled nontoxic). Snow sprays may be harmful if the aerosol propellants are used improperly.
- Alcohol poisoning is a common risk for children during the holiday season. Many parents host holiday parties where alcohol is served. Take care to remove **all** empty and partially empty cups as soon as possible. Because kids imitate adults, many may drink the beverages they see adults drinking. Children become "drunk" much more quickly than adults, so even small amounts of alcohol can be dangerous.
- Food poisoning is another potential holiday hazard. Practice food safety by washing hands, utensils, dishes, and anything else that comes in contact with raw meat, including poultry and fish, and raw eggs before and after use. Don't contaminate a serving dish with raw meat. Store leftovers properly and heat them thoroughly before serving.

Choking and Swallowing

- Tree ornaments, light bulbs, icicles, tinsel, and small toys are potential choking hazards for small children because they may block the airway. The general rule of thumb is that if it's small enough to fit in the mouths of babies and toddlers, it's too small to play with.
- Common holiday foods such as peanuts or popcorn are potential choking hazards and should not be given to children under age 4.
- The needles of holiday trees can cause painful cuts in the mouth and throat of a child who swallows them.
- Angel hair (made from finely spun glass) and ornament hangers may cause cuts, skin irritation, or eye damage if touched or swallowed by children.

Fire

- Keep your tree secured in a sturdy stand so that it doesn't tip over (or isn't knocked over by kids or pets) and keep it away from all heat sources, such as electrical outlets, radiators, and portable space heaters. If you buy an artificial tree, be sure it's labeled "fire-retardant." Unplug all lights, both indoor and outdoor, and extinguish all candles every night before you go to bed.
- Avoid using real candles on a tree because if the needles are dry, they can easily catch fire. Never leave the room with taper candles or menorah candles burning — it only takes a minute for a spark from a candle to burst into flames. Keep lit candles away from windowsills and mantles and use only flame-retardant decorations when decking your halls.
- Circuits that are overloaded with lights, decorations, and accessories can start a fire. Don't overload indoor or outdoor electrical outlets.
- Have your fireplace inspected before you light your first fire of the season. A chimney professional can clean your fireplace and ensure that it is safe to use. You can protect your family by using a sturdy fireplace screen when burning fires. Never burn paper or pine boughs, since those materials can float out

of the chimney and ignite a nearby home or your own roof.

- Practice fire safety, have a family emergency plan in the event of a fire, and check smoke detectors before you put up your holiday decorations. These steps will ensure that your family can celebrate many holiday seasons to come.

Accidents

- A lot of cooking goes on during the holiday season, so there are many opportunities for burns and scaldings. Keep pot handles turned away from the front of the stove and always keep the oven door closed. To prevent accidents, watch your kids while you bake or cook. Kitchen appliances should be clean to prevent potential fires.
- Keep breakable ornaments out of young kids' reach — or keep them off the tree until your children are older. If one does break, clean up the pieces quickly.
- Car accidents and injuries to children increase during the holiday season. Prevent a holiday ER visit by making sure that kids are buckled up securely during car rides and don't drive after drinking alcohol. And be extra cautious when traveling at night on holidays such as Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, when there is a higher incidence of impaired driving.
- Sledding accidents can be very serious. Young kids should be supervised and should avoid dangerous sledding areas, such as rocky areas, steep hills, and crowded sledding hills.

Reviewed by: Steven Dowshen, MD

Date reviewed: December 2014

Note: All information on KidsHealth® is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor.

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Post Test – December 2020

**Please keep this test and certificate in your files for Licensing.
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1. _____ of plant poisoning can include rashes, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.
2. “Bubble lights” containing _____ _____ can be poisonous if a child drinks the fluid from more than one light (even if labeled nontoxic).
3. _____ poisoning is a common risk for children during the holiday season.
4. Don’t contaminate a serving dish with _____ meat. Store leftovers properly and _____ them thoroughly before serving.
5. Tree ornaments, light bulbs, icicles, tinsel and small toys are potential choking hazards for small children because they may block the airway. True or False?
6. Angel hair (made from _____ _____) and ornaments hangers may cause cuts, skin irritation or eye damage if touched or swallowed by children.
7. If you buy an artificial tree, be sure it is labeled “_____ _____”.
8. Keep lit candles on your windowsill or mantles and use only flame-retardant decorations when decking your halls. True or False?
9. Practice _____ _____, have a family emergency plan in the event of a fire and check smoke detectors before you put up decorations.
10. Keep pot handles turned away from the _____ of the stove and always keep the oven door closed.

November 2020 Quiz Answers. 1.Portions 2.Overweight/Obese 3.Calories
4.Nutrition 5.True 6.Divided Plate 7.TV/Screens 8.False 9.3/4 10.Signals



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Given this date _____

Elizabeth Curtis
Training Coordinator
Southwest Human Development Services