

Holiday Safety Tips

The holidays can be a wondrous time for your child. Decorations, treats, visitors and gifts are exciting and often overwhelming. These tips can help you and your family enjoy a safer holiday season.

Your Christmas Tree

- Don't use tinsel. It is easy to swallow and can also get wound around baby's fingers and cut off circulation.
- Small, glass or leaded ornaments should be placed high up on the tree, safely out of baby's reach.
- Don't use new or vintage bubble lights. They may contain methylene chloride, which can be harmful or fatal if swallowed or absorbed through the skin.
- Be sure your tree is secure in the stand. Babies and pets can pull on the branches and topple the tree.
- Never leave a baby or toddler alone near the tree.



Don't let your tree be a fire hazard by:

- Buying an artificial tree that is labelled fire resistant. While these trees can still catch fire, they resist burning and extinguish quickly.
- Buying a fresh, green live tree with needles that are hard to pull out and branches that bend, not break, under pressure. Keep your tree watered all season.
- Setting your tree up away from baseboards, radiators, fireplaces and other sources of heat.
- Keeping your tree watered all season.
- Securing lightbulbs tightly and turning off the lights when you go to bed or leave home.
- Using Christmas tree lights that are in good working order, certified by CSA, cUL or cETL and rated for indoor use.

Toys and Gifts

- Choose toys that are appropriate for your child's age. Look on the package for the age recommendation. Toys that have small parts are dangerous to children younger than age 3 due to choking risk. Don't leave dreidels where children under age three can find them and choke on them.
- Follow all instructions for assembly and use.
- Make sure toys that are purchased for older children are not dangerous to the baby. A chemistry set, for example, could be hazardous to a younger child. Toys for older children often have small parts, which are a choking risk to a baby or toddler. Keep these toys out of reach.
- Some toys and greeting cards use disc or button batteries which can be harmful if swallowed or placed in nose or ears. Seek medical attention right away if this happens, as a burn can start within two hours. To prevent this from happening make sure battery compartments are sealed or need a screwdriver to open.
- Small, powerful magnets may be found in toys, jewelry, clothing, accessories and household items and can be harmful or fatal if swallowed. Seek medical attention if your child swallowed magnetic pieces.
- Throw out tags, gift-wrap, bags, paper, ribbons, bows and packaging right away since they can put a small child at risk of suffocation or choking.



Hot parent tip:

Check that your toys are not on the Health Canada recall list by visiting <http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/recall-alert-rappel-avis/index-eng.php>.

Candles

- “Flameless” battery-operated candles are the safest choice.
- If using real candles, use sturdy candleholders that cannot be easily tipped.
- When lighting candles, be aware of loose clothing or long hair that could hang down and catch fire.
- Never reach over one candle to light another.
- Never leave burning candles unattended.
- Keep burning candles out of reach of children and away from pets, trees, decorations and wrapping paper.



Holiday Parties

Holiday parties are fun and can be full of distractions. Here are some tips to keep your children safe during get togethers:

- A room full of people doesn’t ensure that your child is being supervised. Designate a caregiver if you are busy and always know who is watching your child.
- Alcoholic drinks, cannabis products, hard candies and nuts, lit candles and other dangerous items should be kept well out of children’s reach. Be sure you alert everyone to this potential danger.
- Purses should be kept out of reach as they may have medications which could cause poisoning or have small items that could cause choking.
- Have people check with you before feeding anything to your baby or toddler since some foods can be a choking hazard.
- Keep pets away from your baby or toddler. Even a loving family dog can become excited or uncontrollable when company is around.
- When visiting other people’s homes, ask the host if you can move dangerous items to higher places and keep the doors to bathrooms and stairways closed.
- Keep your baby away from plants. Some traditional Christmas plants such as mistletoe berries and holly are poisonous.
- When cooking turn pot handles in and don’t leave them unattended. Don’t let children get close to the stove.
- Keep coffee urns and other hot drink dispensers out of the reach of children.
- Watch for electrical cords and table cloths. Children may pull on these and be injured.
- Use a fire-safe barrier to protect children from real and imitation fireplaces and woodstoves.
- Prevent falls by clearing snow and ice from your steps and driveway.

In your motor vehicle

- Remember that all passengers need to be buckled up for every ride. Suitcases, gifts and food should be secured or stored in the trunk.
- In Manitoba it’s illegal to use your cell phone, or other hand-held electronic devices while driving. Penalties include immediate license suspension, \$672 fine and five demerits.
- Every year people get behind the wheel after drinking alcohol or using cannabis. Make sure that you and your guests have a safe ride home. This could be a designated driver, a cab, public transit or call Operation RedNose for a safe ride home.

