



The holidays are an exciting time of year for kids, and at Forest Hills Pediatrics we want to help ensure they have a safe and happy holiday season!

HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

Trees

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label "fire resistant."
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces, radiators or portable heaters. 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 keep your tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.
- Be sure to keep the stand filled with water, because heated rooms can dry live trees out rapidly.

Lights

- Check all tree lights--even if you have 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.
- 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.
- Some light strands may contain lead in the bulb sockets and wire coating, sometimes in high amounts. Make sure your lights are out of reach of young children who might try to mouth them, and wash your hands after handling them.

Decorations

- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals.
- 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 over.
- 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 prevent them from swallowing or inhaling small pieces. Avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a young child to eat them.
- Remove all wrapping papers, bags, paper, ribbons and bows from tree and fireplace areas after gifts are opened. These items can pose suffocation and choking hazards to a small child or can cause a fire if near flame.

Toy Safety

- To prevent both burns and electrical shocks, do not give young children (under age 10) a toy that must be plugged into an electrical outlet. Instead, buy toys that are battery-operated.
- Children can have serious stomach and intestinal problems – including death – after swallowing button batteries or magnets. In addition to toys, button batteries are often found in musical greeting cards, remote controls, hearing aids, and other small electronics. Small, powerful magnets are present in many homes as part of building toy sets. Keep button batteries and magnets away from young children and call your health care provider immediately if your child swallows one.
- Children can choke or suffocate on uninflated or broken balloons; do not allow children under age 8 to play with them.
- Remove tags, 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.

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 like unlocked cabinets, unattended purses, accessible cleaning or laundry products, stairways, or hot radiators.
- Keep a 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 national Poison Help Line, 1-800-222-1222. Laminating the list will prevent it from being torn or damaged by accidental spills.

Fireplaces

- Before lighting any fire, remove all greens, boughs, papers, and other decorations from fireplace area. Check to see that the flue is open.
- 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 gift wrap paper in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.
- If a glass-fronted gas fireplace is used, keep children and others well away from it with a screen or gate. The glass doors can get hot enough to cause serious burns and stay hot long after the fire is out.

- See more at HealthyChildren.org