



SAFE TOYS AND GIFTS MONTH

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)

The holidays offer plenty of reasons to look for those holiday sales and specials. But sometimes the best deal may not be the safest. As Shoppers begin to purchase toys and gifts for children, they need to be mindful of what gift is the safest, especially for younger children.

According to the Consumer Produce Safety Commission (CPSC), there was an estimated 235,300 toy-related injuries treated in emergency rooms across the country. Most of which were head and face injuries consisting of lacerations, contusions or abrasions. 73% of the toy-related injuries reported were to children 15 and younger, while an estimated 82,300 (35%) were to children younger than 5 years of age.

Although toy safety regulations have improved, the CPSC has had 38 toy recalls in 2009 alone. You can check our the recalled products at www.cpsc.gov or by calling the CPSC at 800-638-2772.

In addition, here a few tips to help you find the perfect and safe toy for those little one's during this holiday season.

- Make recommendations to family members and friends about gifts that you feel are appropriate for your child.
- Inspect all toys as much as possible before taking them out of the box. Once opened, go through each part of the toy to make sure there are no small parts that could be choking hazards or have sharp edges.
- Avoid toys that shoot or include parts that fly off. BB guns and air guns should not even be considered toys.
- Keep toys meant for older children away from younger ones. Closely monitor all activities to make sure smaller children do not have access to toys that are not at their age-appropriate level.
- Inspect toys for sturdiness. Your child's toys should be durable, with no sharp edges or points. The toys should also withstand impact. Dispose of plastic wrapping material immediately on toys as they may have sharp edges.
- Never give toys with small parts to young children. If a part of a toy can fit inside a toilet paper roll, the toy is considered a choking hazard and is not appropriate for children under the age of 3.
- Gifts of sports equipment should always be accompanied by protective gear (such as a basketball with eye goggles, a baseball with a batting helmet with a face shield, a bike with a bike helmet).



Toys are frequently recalled for safety reasons. Check the National Safe Kids Campaign website at <http://www.safekids.org/> for updates and recent toy recalls.

With the right preparation, you can ensure your children enjoy a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

AVOID HOLIDAY STRESS

Source: Agency Fuel

December is a time of presents, pageants and parties. But it is also one of the most stressful times of the year. Whether your holiday plans include traveling, sticking to your budget or just the added stress of all the numerous gatherings with family and friends—holiday stress is real. In fact, the obligations that accompany this time of year can make anyone a real Grinch—even Santa.



As the holidays come near, ask yourself what exactly about the season get you down and use some of the helpful tips below to help keep your stress limit under control.

Budget:

- Make a list and check it twice! Review your shopping list carefully. Does everyone listed on it truly need to be there?
- Set Limits! Write down a maximum dollar limit for each person on your list and vow to stay within that limit.
- Buy in bulk! Have something on hand for those unexpected presents. A tin of homemade cookies or fudge make great last minute gifts.
- Ask yourself—Can I really afford this? A good rule of thumb is to leave your credit cards at home and if you don't have the cash for it—Don't buy it!
- Shop online! With gas prices higher, consider staying home and shopping online. Most retailers will waive shipping fees during the holiday season

Traveling:

- If you are flying make your reservations in advance to get the best connections and rates available.
- Travel on off-peak days and during early morning hours whenever possible. Airports tend to be less crowded during these times.
- Call to confirm that your flight is still on time before leaving for the airport. Delayed or cancelled flights are a major cause of holiday stress.
- If you are driving—Be prepared. Have a professional mechanic examine your vehicle before you leave.
- Know your route—Watch your time! Plan to do most of your driving during non-rush hour times to avoid the holiday rush.
- Take a break! Make frequent rest stops (about every two hours) and limit yourself to an eight hour driving day.
- Wear safety belts at all times! They are the single most effective means of reducing traffic injuries.

Compliance Corner

Breach Notification for Unsecured PHI (Personal Health Information): HHS Interim Final Rule

On August 24, 2009, the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) issued an interim final rule (Breach Notification Rule) to require notification of breaches of unsecured Protected Health Information. The Breach Notification Rule applied to breaches of unsecured PHI that occur on or after September 23, 2009.



HHS (Dept of Health & Human Services) was directed to issue the Breach Notification Rule by the Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act, which was part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The breach notification provisions of the HITECH Act apply to HIPAA Covered Entities and Business Associates that access, maintain, retain, modify, record, store, destroy or otherwise hold, use or disclose unsecured PHI.

The HITECH Act requires HIPAA Covered Entities to provide notification to affected individuals and to HHS following the discovery of a breach or unsecured PHI. In some cases, Covered Entities must also notify the media. In the case of a breach of unsecured PHI by a Covered Entity's Business Associate, the Business Associate must notify the Covered Entity of the breach. The Act also required HHS to post on its website a list of Covered Entities that experience breaches of unsecured PHI that involve more than 500 individuals.

For more information on the Breach Notification Rule and what it means to your organization go to www.hhs.gov/ocr/privacy/



Make Healthy Holiday Choices

The holiday season brings thoughts of family, friends, fun and food. However, each year, millions of Americans struggle to maintain their waistlines during the holidays while surrounded by tempting treats.

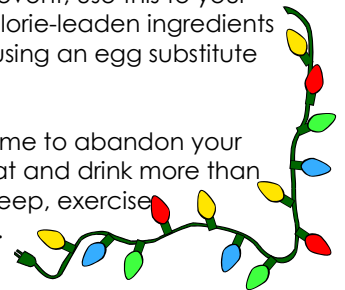
Consider the following health tips to enjoy all your holiday parties—while also staying in control of your eating:

- Do not leave the house on an empty stomach—this promotes overeating.
- Make socializing your top priority; conversation will keep you occupied and away from the food table.
- Abstain from or limit your drinking, as alcohol increases hunger and lowers willpower.

Reduce your portion sizes and stop eating when you feel satisfied rather than stuffed.

If you are the one hosting a holiday event, use this to your advantage. Substitute high-fat or calorie-laden ingredients with more healthy choices, such as using an egg substitute rather than a whole egg.

Remember . . . The holidays are no time to abandon your healthy habits or feel pressured to eat and drink more than usual. Make sure you get plenty of sleep, exercise and plan your meals ahead of time.



Put down those Christmas Cookies

You may be trying to eat healthy, but be honest . . . It's hard not to overindulge during the holidays. Here is a perfect snack for your guests—and it's fast and easy too! Try serving as an after-dinner treat. Dessert may not even be missed! As for leftovers? Bring them to work as a healthy snack?



Trail Mix

- 1 cup low-fat wheat cereal
- 1 cup dried fruit (try cranberries, apricot bits, banana chips or all three)
- 1 cup dried sweet corn
- 1 cup unsalted soy nuts or sunflower seeds
- 1/4 cup unsalted almonds

Mix ingredients together and serve! Serves 8.

Nutritional information: 219 calories; 9 g total fat, 0 mg cholesterol; 10 g protein.

**We appreciate the opportunity to have worked with you
and your organization in 2009.**

Happy Holidays

from

Neace Lukens