



THE PUBLIC PULSE
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TOP HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS TO KEEP CHILDREN SAFE AND INJURY FREE
Safe Kids North Carolina reminds parents to help avoid preventable injuries

The holiday season is one of the most exciting times of the year for your little ones, but it's also a time when children are at risk for injuries. That's why Safe Kids North Carolina is encouraging all parents and caregivers to be prepared with simple tips this holiday season.

Hundreds of children are seen in emergency rooms each year for injuries caused by non-electric Christmas decorations and toy-related injuries. The danger of carbon monoxide is also increased in the winter because fuel-powered devices are used more frequently.

“The holidays are a time when many families decorate their homes, travel to see family and friends, and eat lots of great food,” said N.C. Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey. “But with all these activities come safety risks we may not always think about. By reminding ourselves of a few safety tips, the holidays can be safer and more fun for everyone.”

Safe Kids North Carolina recommends the following tips to stay safe during the holidays:

- Check your car seat before holiday travel. Seventy-three percent of car seats are not used or installed correctly, so before you hit the road, check your car seat. If you have questions or concerns, certified child passenger safety technicians are able to help install or ensure the seat is correctly installed.
- Bulky coats and car seats don't mix. If it is cold outside, cover babies and young children with a thick blanket to keep them warm after they are securely strapped into their seat. Bulky winter clothes and coats can keep a car seat from doing its job.
- Find the perfect toy for the right age. Consider your child's age when purchasing a toy or game. Before you have settled on the perfect toy, check to make sure there are not any small parts or other potential choking hazards.
- Keep button batteries away from young kids. Keep a special eye on small pieces, including button batteries that may be included in electronic toys. While these kinds of games are great for older kids, they can pose a potential danger for younger, curious siblings.
- Make sure your home has a carbon monoxide alarm. As with smoke alarms, install a carbon monoxide alarm on every level of your home, especially near sleeping areas, and keep them at least 15 feet away from fuel-burning appliances.



DAVIDSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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- Engage older kids in cooking. Teach older, responsible children how to cook safely. Teach them to never leave the kitchen while they are using the stove or oven, to use oven mitts or potholders when handling hot items, and show them how to safely operate a microwave oven.
- Plan for safe sleep and more. If your holiday travel plans include spending the night outside of your home, make sure your baby and children have a safe place to sleep. Ensure the home or hotel has a working carbon monoxide alarm and smoke alarm.
- Be smart about warming up. Do not leave a car engine running inside a garage. If you are heating up a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Also, during severe weather, do not use a grill, generator or camping stove inside your home, garage or near a window. Install carbon monoxide alarms to protect against fuel-burning emergencies.
- Decorate your tree with your kids in mind. Kids are curious and will want to play with the ornaments on the tree. Move the ornaments that are breakable or have metal hooks towards the top of the tree.
- Check the lights. Inspect the lights on your tree or around the home for exposed or frayed wires, loose connections or broken sockets.
- Blow out candles and store matches out of reach. Keep holiday candles at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn and remember to blow them out when you leave the room or go to sleep. Make a habit of placing matches and lighters in a safe place -- out of children's reach.
- Keep harmful plants out of reach. Plants can spruce up your holiday decorating, but keep those that may be poisonous out of reach of children or pets. This includes mistletoe berries and holly berry.

For more information about health department services, community data, or health status data, contact the Public Information Officer at the Davidson County Health Department at 336-242-2354.