



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Holiday safety tips: Avoid toy hazards

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gift-giving is part of the joy of the season. Parents, grandparents and other gift-givers can help protect children from injury this year by increasing their knowledge of toy safety, toy recalls, and the Consumer Products Safety Commission's list of five toy hazards this year.

"Make this holiday season a safe one by choosing appropriate gifts for a child's age and warning all gift givers about the five toy hazards that can take all the fun out of any celebration." said Nancy Wright, Director of the Injury Prevention Division, Alabama Department of Public Health

Here are CPSC's top safe shopping tips for this year:

- Magnets – For children under age 6, avoid building sets with small magnets. If swallowed, serious injuries or death can occur.
- Small Parts – For children younger than age 3, avoid toys with small parts, which can cause choking.
- Ride-on Toys – Riding toys, skateboards and in-line skates go fast and falls could be deadly. Helmets and safety gear should be sized to fit.
- Projectile Toys – Projectile toys such as air rockets, darts and slingshots are for older children. Improper use of these toys can result in serious eye injuries.
- Chargers and Adapters – Charging batteries should be supervised by adults. Chargers and adapters can pose thermal burn hazards to children.

CPSC also recommends using the following tips to help choose appropriate toys for children:

- Be a label reader. Look for toy labels that give age and safety recommendations and use that information as a guide.
- Select toys to suit the age, abilities, skills and interest level of the intended child. Look for sturdy construction, such as tightly-secured eyes, noses and other potential small parts.
- For all children under 8, avoid toys that have sharp edges and points.

Once the gifts are open:

- Immediately discard plastic wrappings on toys before they become dangerous play things.
- Keep toys appropriate for older children away from younger siblings or neighbors.
- Pay attention to instructions and warnings on battery chargers. Some chargers lack any device to prevent overcharging.

CPSC has reports of 20 toy-related deaths involving children under age 15 that occurred in 2005. Nine of these deaths occurred when a child choked or aspirated on a small ball or other toy parts. Also, in 2005 an estimated 152,400 children under 15 years old were treated for toy-related injuries in U.S. hospital emergency rooms. The majority of these injuries were not the result of a recalled or dangerous product. Instead, injuries from riding toys such as falls, made up a significant number of the injuries.

Consumers who have already purchased gifts should make sure they check that their gift lists do not include any of the recalled toys or children's products on CPSC's Web site at www.cpsc.gov.

For more injury prevention information visit the Alabama Department of Public Health's Web site at www.adph.org/injuryprevention.