

Safe Toy and Gift Month



It's the holiday season which typically means toy-sharing and gift-giving. If you are not careful, a gift or toy could cause serious injuries to a loved one. Before you give a child a new toy, it's important to consider the following suggestions.

Pay Attention to Recommended Age Ranges - The American Academy of Pediatrics notes the importance of looking at the age level recommended on toys to match the ability, skill, and interest level of the child. Avoid giving gifts to children above their actual age even if you think they are more advanced or mature to avoid frustrating them or exposing them to safety hazards.

Handle Toys Personally Before Purchasing or Gift-Giving - While in the store or prior to giving the toy to the child, examine every part and all accompanying parts. Briefly read the instructions. Look for potentially dangerous things including sharp edges, small removable parts, or cords. Never give toys with removable magnets or button batteries to young children as they look like candy and can be easily swallowed.

Look For Quality Construction - Make sure toys have an American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) label. This means the toy has met national safety standards. Double-check toys or the materials they are made from are clearly labeled non-toxic. Examine them for durability and stay away from toys which seem poorly made should a child attempt to break, crush, or pull them apart.

Include Safety Gear When Appropriate - Active toys children will use outside like a bicycle, skateboard, or air rifle, should also include a helmet, protective pads, or eye protection which are sized to fit the child. This will ensure they stay as safe as possible when using the toy.

These simple suggestions will help ensure you are always purchasing and gifting appropriate toys for the children you know.

Once gifts are open, immediately discard plastic wrapping or packaging materials before they become dangerous playthings. Adults should supervise battery charging and pay attention to warnings on adapters as some lack a mechanism to prevent overcharging and can pose thermal burn hazards to children.

Careful consideration, common sense, and vigilance are key to ensuring that no child is harmed by a toy or game creating a happy, healthy, and safe gift-giving experience for all.

SAFE TOY FACTS AND INFORMATION

- In a 2020 report issued by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, nearly 150,000 children were treated for toy-related injuries in hospital emergency rooms.
- Unintended injuries occur from choking on small toy parts, swallowing batteries or magnets, getting strangled by cords or strings, and being exposed to unsafe levels of chemicals such as lead.
- Faulty design isn't the sole cause of injuries. Chance, regular usage, or lack of adult supervision also play a major role in these incidents.
- If you are concerned about the safety of a particular toy, check with the Consumer Product Safety Commission by calling 800-638-2772 or visiting, [CPSC.gov](https://www.cpsc.gov). They have an online toy safety shopping guide, free safety alerts, a recall list of products, posters, brochures, and handbooks to help spread community consumer product safety information.