



Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

December is Safe Toy and Gift Month

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The holiday season is upon us and for some it means the stress and anxiety of battling last minute crowds at the mall, frantically cleaning for visiting in-laws and agonizing over preparing the perfect holiday meal.

But not you, you are a holiday planning superstar, and your perfectly planned holiday checklist has been finished for weeks. Your halls are decked, your stockings are hung by the chimney with care and all of your gifts follow the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's recommendations for safe toys and gifts.

Wait, you haven't done the last one? Maybe you're not the holiday planning superstar you think you are, or maybe you aren't aware of the serious risks involved in giving unsafe holiday toys and gifts. In 2007, the CPSC reported 18 toy-related deaths and an estimated 170,100 hospital emergency-room treated injuries to children under 15. Although these consequences are real, prevention is as simple as following a few safety guidelines when shopping for the perfect holiday gift. The CPSC recommends the following toy safety shopping tips:

Under 3 Years Old

- Children under 3 tend to put everything in their mouths. Avoid buying toys intended for older children that may have small parts that pose a choking danger.
- Never let children of any age play with deflated or broken balloons because of the choking danger.
- Avoid marbles, balls and games with balls that have a diameter of 1.75 inches or less. These products also pose a choking hazard to young children.
- Children at this age pull, prod and twist toys. Look for toys that are well-made with tightly secured eyes, noses and other parts.
- Avoid toys that have sharp edges and points.



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Ages 3 to 5

- Avoid toys that are constructed with thin, brittle plastic that might easily break into small pieces or leave jagged edges.
- Look for household art materials, including crayons and paint sets, marked with the designation "ASTM D-4236." This means the product has been reviewed for chronic health hazards and, if necessary, the product has been labeled with cautionary information.
- Teach older children to keep their toys away from their younger brothers and sisters.

Ages 6-12

- For all children, adults should check toys periodically for breakage and potential hazards. Damaged or dangerous toys should be repaired or thrown away.
- If buying a toy gun, be sure the barrel, or the entire gun, is brightly colored so that it's not mistaken for a real gun.
- If you buy a bicycle for any age child, buy a helmet too, and make sure the child wears it.
- Teach all children to put toys away when they're finished playing so they don't trip over them or fall on them.

... And always READ THE LABEL

The CPSC requires toy manufacturers to meet stringent safety standards and to label certain toys that could be a hazard for younger children. Look for labels that give age recommendations and use that information as a guide. Labels on toys that state "not recommended for children under 3 ... contains small parts," are labeled that way because they may pose a choking hazard to children under 3. Toys should be developmentally appropriate to suit the skills, abilities and interests of the child.

The CPSC oversees the safety of toys and many other consumer products. For more information about purchasing safe toys and gifts, go to:

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Toll-Free Hotline, 1-800-638-2772

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, www.cpsc.gov