

Toy Safety

Each year in the United States, an estimated 3 billion toys and games are sold. In 2009, an estimated 185,900 children ages 14 and under were treated in an emergency department for a toy-related injury. 45 percent of toy-related injuries were to the head or face.



General Safety Tips

- Remove and dispose of all unnecessary toy packaging and gift-wrap as soon as possible. Piles of discarded gift-wrap can conceal sharp objects like scissors and the edges of hard plastic packaging that can cut small fingers.
- Be a good role model and set rules and guidelines for safe play.
- Keep toys organized. Have easily accessible toy storage and keep a separate toy chest for older children whose toys may contain small parts not suitable for younger siblings.
- Take a basic first aid class so you'll feel prepared to handle a toy emergency.

Sign up and Watch for recalls

Register to keep up-to-date on dangerous products by signing up to have recall announcements sent directly to your email. You can choose to receive all recall announcements or just children's product recalls only. You can also call the CPSC's toll-free hotline at (800) 638-CPSC. For information about all types of recalls, visit www.recalls.gov

Buy age-appropriate toys.

Safety labels on the toy packaging can help guide you.

Test toys for choking potential

Use an empty toilet paper tube to test for choking potential. If a toy can slip through the tube, it's a choking hazard for children under 3.

Check toys

Regularly examine toys for damage, breakage or potential hazards. Make necessary repairs immediately or throw the toys away out of children's reach.

Supervise children when they are playing

Toys with Straps, cords, ribbons, loops and strings can be a strangulation hazard to a child. These toys should never be hung in cribs or playpens where children can become entangled.

Toys that use electricity present a potential burn or shock hazard. Children under 8 years of age should not use toys with a heating element. Pay attention to instructions and warnings on battery chargers. Some chargers lack any device to prevent overcharging.

Toys with magnets should only be used with children over the age of 6. If swallowed, these tiny magnets can cause serious injuries and/or death can occur.

Toys with small parts should be avoided by children under the age of 3 to prevent choking.

Choose Mylar balloons

These are a safer alternative to latex balloons.

Common Toy Injuries

Many toy-related deaths are caused by choking, drowning, a riding toy incident or strangulation. Small play balls and balloons account for many choking deaths among children. Riding toys including non-motorized scooters and tricycles are associated with more injuries than any other toy group. In 2009, more than 49,500 injuries to children were treated in emergency departments due to injuries associated with non-motorized scooters.

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Toy Safety Checklist

Is the toy age-appropriate?

Always follow the age guidelines indicated on toy packaging. Even a toy designated for a 3-year-old may have parts that are too small for a 2-year-old to handle properly.

Are there any small, loose parts that your child can swallow?

If you're not sure, do the toilet paper tube test. Anything small enough to pass through the tube is too small to be given to a child under 3 years old. Marbles, coins, balls and small building blocks are common culprits. Check to make sure buttons, eyes and noses are tightly attached to stuffed animals and dolls. For children under 3, purchase dolls/animals with stitched faces instead. Young children often chew on their toys. Avoid toys with small pieces that can be easily chewed off and swallowed.

Does the toy have a string, ribbon, straps or cord longer than 7 inches?

For young children, avoid any toy and clothing with strings.

Is your toy non-toxic?

Check recall lists to make sure toys have a non-toxic, durable finish. For arts and crafts supplies, look for the ACMI (Art and Creative Material Institute, Inc.) seal which indicates the toy is non-toxic.

Does the toy have sharp edges or parts that may cut small hands or fingers?

Look for sharp or pointy edges and breakable parts that could be sharp. Avoid these toys for kids under eight.

Does the toy include magnets?

Many toys today require small magnets and button batteries to operate them. Books, building sets, action figures, puzzles and dolls may contain small, powerful magnets and button batteries that can be fatal if swallowed by children.

Could the toy be a fire hazard?

Fabric toys should be labeled as flame retardant or flame resistant. Electrical toys with batteries or electric plugs pose a burn hazard so they should be avoided for kids under eight.

Does the toy include any throwing or shooting projectiles?

It's best to avoid these toys because they can cause injuries, especially to the eyes. Look for or purchase sets that include eye protection, like glasses or goggles.

Quick Facts - In 2009

- Approximately 50% percent of toy-related injuries resulting in emergency department visits occurred to children under the age of 5.
- Choking is a leading cause of injury among children under 3.
- Coins and toys account for the most nonfood-related choking incidents.
- Boys accounted for 58 percent of all toy-related injuries.
- Among children's products, latex balloons are the number one cause of choking deaths. A majority of these deaths are among children ages 5 and under.

Source: Consumer Product Safety Commission and Safekids



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