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TOY SAFETY

Choosing the right toy for the age of the child and proper use of toys can greatly reduce the incidence and severity of injuries.

Prevention Tips

- Check the Web site of the [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](http://www.cpsc.gov) for information on recent toy recalls.
- When selecting toys, consider the child's age, interests and skill level, look for quality design and construction, and follow age and safety recommendations on labels.
- Ensure that toys are used in a safe environment. For example, riding toys should not be used near stairs, traffic or swimming pools.
- Supervise children at play. Play is even more valuable when adults become involved and interact with children rather than supervising from a distance.
- Teach children to put toys away safely after playing. Ensure that toys intended for younger children are stored separately from those for older children.
- Consider purchasing a small parts tester (or use the cardboard tube from a toilet paper roll) to determine whether small toys may present a choking hazard to children under age 3. Do not let small children play with anything that can fit into either a tester or a toilet paper tube.
- Inspect old and new toys regularly for damage and potential hazards. Make any necessary repairs immediately or throw away damaged toys.
- Young children should never play with toys with strings, straps or cords longer than 7 inches, which could strangle them.
- Use mylar balloons instead of latex balloons. Children can choke or suffocate on uninflated or broken balloons. If you must use latex balloons, store them out of reach of children, do not allow children to inflate them, and deflate and throw away balloons and balloon pieces after use.
- Electrical toys are a potential burn hazard. Small children should not use toys with electrical plugs.

Toys and Lead Exposure

Through normal hand-to-mouth activity, children may be exposed to lead from toys that have been made in other countries and imported into the country, or from antique toys and collectibles passed down through generations. The [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](http://www.cpsc.gov) (CPSC) issues recalls of toys that could potentially expose children to lead.

Acknowledgments:

[Safe Kids Worldwide](http://www.safekids.org)

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission



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