

2011
Holiday Health &
Safety Tips

Harford County Health Department



Toy Safety

Before purchasing a toy this holiday season, keep in mind the following:

- **Be sure the toy is age-appropriate.** Check the age recommendation on products, but also keep in mind the mental and physical abilities of the child for whom you are buying.
- **Avoid certain toys.** Steer clear of those which contain loose parts, sharp edges, or paint that could chip with chewing and playing.
- **Consider younger siblings.** Be cautious of buying any toy that would pose a threat to a younger brother or sister if they were to get a hold of it.
- **Don't forget a helmet.** If purchasing a riding toy, remember to include a helmet and be aware of keeping these toys away from stairs, traffic, and water.
- **Remember to clean up.** Discard of all plastic and string immediately after presents are opened to eliminate danger to small children.

Travel Safety

The holiday season is a great time to visit family and friends, but before traveling don't forget to:

- **Check conditions.** Before leaving, check your area's road and weather conditions, as well as the areas through which you will be traveling. If inclement weather is expected, let someone at your destination know when you are leaving and when to expect you.
- **Winterize your car.** Before traveling, be sure that oil level, tire pressure, defroster, antifreeze, and breaks are all checked by a certified mechanic, and that any necessary repairs and/or services are made.
- **Be prepared.** Begin with a full tank of gas and be prepared for any emergency. Things to have in your vehicle may include: snow scraper, flashlight, jumper cables, flares, first aid kit, blankets, and bottled water.
- **Leave early.** Heavy traffic during the holidays is inevitable. Allow yourself plenty of time to get to your destination safely and with less stress.
- **Plan ahead.** If consuming alcohol, plan for a designated driver. Never drink and drive or allow another person to drink and drive.



Home Safety

Whether spending the holidays at home or away, it is important to keep your house safe. To prevent any danger in your home, be sure to:

- **Have chimney and fireplace inspected and cleaned.**
- **Test all smoke detectors** and replace batteries if it's needed.
- **Be prepared for power outages.** Stock up on non-perishable food items and battery-operated devices. Remember to keep generators at least 20 feet away from the house
- **Have your heating system serviced** to ensure it is working safely and correctly
- **Install a carbon monoxide (CO) detector** in your home to alert you of any presence of the deadly gas
- **Coat driveways and walkways** with cat litter or sand when ice is present



Mental Health

Stress can be at an all-time high during the holidays, which can pose a threat to your heart and overall health. Keep stress levels down by:

- **Doing only what you can.** There can be lots of activities to attend this time of year on top of an endless amount shopping and work around the home to get done. Keep in mind that you don't have to do it all. Don't be afraid to say "no" to commitments that aren't practical for you.
- **Utilizing friends and family when help is needed.**
- **Getting adequate rest.** Stress becomes increasingly more difficult to manage when you are sleep-deprived.
- **Being aware of spending.** Money is a main stressor during the holidays, so create a budget and be sure to stick to it.
- **Exercising.** Not only does working out help you physically, but also helps to reduce stress and maintain a positive outlook during the holidays.
- **Slowing down.** Remind yourself what the holidays are about and that everything does not need to be perfect to be enjoyed.