



Home Safety Tips : Toys Safety Tips



Select Children's Toys with Safety in Mind

According to the Home Safety Council's State of Home Safety in America™ (2002), emergency departments reported nearly 170,000 visits due to injuries related to toys at home in a single year. To help reduce the risk of serious injury, always follow safety guidelines when choosing toys for children. Before choosing toys and games for little ones on your shopping list, consider each child's age, skills and abilities. Toys that are beyond your child's age and developmental ability can be unsafe for him or her, so select toys that are appropriate rather than those children can "grow into". Consider the following guidelines for selecting toys for your child:

- When purchasing toys for infants and toddlers, select toys, puzzles, rattles and teething toys that are too large to be swallowed.
- Read the labels and other packaging information and base your selection on age recommendations.
- Look for "washable/hygienic materials" or similar labeling on stuffed toys and dolls and "flame retardant/flame resistant" labeling on fabric products and costumes.
- Read assembly and use instructions to ensure the toy is appropriate for the child you have in mind.
- If you purchase stuffed toys, look for those that are rated safe for infants, which will ensure specific safety features, such as secure attachment of the stuffed toys' eyes and noses and non-removable squeaking mechanisms.
- Avoid toys with long strings or cords, which could entangle and strangle a child.
- The Home Safety Council recommends against using latex balloons in homes with young children, as they can swallow an unfilled or broken balloon and suffocate.
- Remove and discard plastic wrapping and bags as soon as the toy is opened, as these items are a suffocation hazard to young children.
- Look carefully at infants' toys and dispose of those with small broken parts that could be lodged in an infant's throat.
- Motorized and electric toys and games and toys with heavy, sharp and pointed parts or edges can be especially dangerous for young children.
- Adult games, such as darts, should be stored up high, out of the reach of all children.
- Always supervise children closely. Don't permit younger children to play with toys designed for older children or adults.

Toy Safety Checklist

BEFORE BUYING

- ☐ Use recommended age labelling as a guide
- ☐ Look for warnings or other safety messages on toy packaging
- ☐ Buy only toys suitable for the child's age group
- ☐ Avoid toys with sharp points or edges
- ☐ Check rigid eyes and noses on soft toys; make sure they cannot be pulled off
- ☐ Examine wheels on toy cars to make sure they are secure
- ☐ Make sure small parts of larger toys cannot break off

AFTER BUYING

- ☐ Look for warnings or other safety messages on toy packaging
- ☐ Read carefully all instructions included in and on the toy packaging
- ☐ Throw away all toy packaging such as plastic, cellophane and styrofoam
- ☐ Teach your child the proper use of toys. For example, darts and arrows should not be pointed at anyone
- ☐ Throw away broken toys that cannot be fixed
- ☐ Make sure that batteries in toys are properly installed
- ☐ Do not allow a child to sleep with a battery-operated toy
- ☐ Supervise children playing with balloons
- ☐ Throw away pieces of broken balloons
- ☐ Remove toys and mobiles strung across cribs and playpens when baby begins to push up with hands and knees
- ☐ Make sure that large toy boxes have good ventilation and that the lid is lightweight and well supported
- ☐ Teach children to put their toys away
- ☐ Examine toys regularly for signs of wear and tear

