

## Holiday Safety

Make safety a part of your holiday plans.

Follow these safety tips to help ensure that you, your family, and your friends have a safe and injury-free holiday season. These precautions will help to reduce the risk of injuries from falls, fire and burns, choking, and poisoning.

### Christmas Trees, Holiday Plants, and Decorations

- If using a live tree, choose one that is not brittle and keep it well-watered at all times.
- Use a sturdy, broad-based stand and place the tree away from floor heaters, fireplaces, or other heat sources.
- Never decorate any tree with candles.
- If using an artificial tree, choose one that is flame resistant.
- Artificial metallic trees conduct electricity. Do not put electric lights on a metallic tree.
- Keep small, sharp, or breakable holiday decorations out of the reach of toddlers. Put small tree ornaments and tinsel near the top of the tree.
- Some decorations contain fiberglass, lead, and other potentially toxic chemicals. Do not use these where children will be present.
- Some holiday plants are toxic to humans (e.g., mistletoe, yew, and holly berries). Keep these plants out of reach of young children. For more information about plant poisoning, see <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/Padis/hi-padis-plant-guide.pdf>

### Fire Safety

- Do not overload electrical outlets; check all sockets and plugs for wear.
- Use lights that are certified for use in Canada (e.g., labelled with CSA, cUL, or cETL).
- Holiday lights and other light-up decorations are rated for indoor or outdoor use. Outdoor lights and decorations should only be used outside your home.
- Examine your light strings and extension cords each year; discard any that are frayed or have exposed electrical wires.
- Always turn off holiday lights when leaving the house or going to bed.
- Never leave candles unattended.
- Check batteries in smoke alarms and install carbon monoxide alarms on every level of your home, especially near sleeping areas.



### For More Information Contact:

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### The Saskatchewan Prevention Institute is supported by:

Government of Saskatchewan  
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- Keep an all-purpose, dry chemical fire extinguisher nearby and know how to use it.
- Plan fire escape routes; make sure everyone in the home knows them.
- Use plastic hooks or insulated staples, not nails or tacks, to put up lights.

### Entertaining

- Always remember that your guests are your responsibility.
- Take turns being the adult responsible for supervising young children.
- Have non-alcoholic drinks on hand for pregnant and abstaining guests.
- Offer rides, take keys, and call cabs; it is illegal and unsafe to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Always clean up immediately after a holiday party in your home. Children are naturally curious and may choke on leftover food or consume alcohol, drugs, or tobacco if left out.
- Keep holiday candy, nuts, and other choking hazards out of the reach of toddlers.
- Keep visitors' bags out of reach. Some people carry their medications with them and medication can be poisonous to children.
- Ensure babysitters and other caregivers are aware of the safety rules of your home.



### Toys and Gifts

- Buy age appropriate toys for children. Small parts may cause choking. Ensure all parts such as wheels and eyes are well secured.
- Read and follow age labels, warnings, and instructions that come with toys.
- Ensure that batteries are not accessible to children and are properly installed by an adult.
- Throw away all packing materials such as plastic bags and Styrofoam pellets as soon as possible. Children can suffocate while playing with them.
- Children will be interested in everyone's gifts. Quickly put away adult gifts that could be hazardous (e.g., perfume, alcohol, appliances, tools).

### Selected References

Government of Canada. (2015). Tips for holiday safety. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/home-safety/tips-holiday-safety.html>

Parachute. (n.d.). 12 holiday home safety tips. Retrieved from <http://www.parachutecanada.org/blog/item/12-holiday-home-safety-tips>