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Choose Safe Toys this Holiday Season

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)— Millions of toys are out there, and hundreds of new ones hit the stores each year. Toys are supposed to be fun and are an important part of any child's development. But each year, scores of kids are treated in hospital emergency departments for toy-related injuries.

While toy shopping, choose toys to suit the age, abilities, skills and interest level of the intended child.

“Simple toys that stimulate imaginative play are often better than the more expensive, electronic toys,” said Sarah Sams, M.D., associate director for Grant Medical Center Family Medicine Residency Program, Columbus, Ohio.

For infants, toddlers and preschoolers look for toys that can withstand pulling and twisting; make sure buttons and other parts are securely attached; and avoid toys with cords and strings, toys with thin plastic that might break and marbles, coins, and balls as they tend to put things in their mouths, increasing the risk of choking.

Avoid toys that shoot or include parts that fly off. Also, make sure a toy is not too loud (if it is loud to you, it is too loud for the child and could damage the child's hearing).

After you have bought safe toys, it is also important to make sure kids know how to use them. The best way to do this is by supervising play. Playing with your kids teaches them how to play safely while having fun. Check toys regularly to make sure they are not broken or unusable. If toys are broken or unusable, repair or throw them away.

“When there are several children of different ages in the home, make sure that the older children's toys with smaller parts are kept out of the reach of the younger children,” recommends Sams.

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) closely monitors and regulates toys. Any toys made in, or imported into, the United States after 1995 must comply with CPSC standards. Check the CPSC Web site, www.cpsc.gov, for the latest information about toy recalls. To report a toy you think is unsafe, call the CPSC hotline at 800.638.2772.

The Ohio Academy of Family Physicians is a statewide professional association with more than 4,400 members, including practicing physicians, family medicine residents and medical students. The scope of family medicine encompasses all ages, both sexes and every disease entity. Family physicians provide comprehensive, continuing care to all members of the family.



FACT SHEET

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When Choosing Toys:

- Make sure the toy is age-appropriate
- Ensure the toy meets the ability, skill and interest level of the child
- For small children, make sure buttons and other parts are securely attached

Items to avoid:

- Toys with cords and strings
- Toys with thin plastic or parts
- Marbles, coins and balls
- Toys that are too loud

Toy Recall Information

- Visit the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Web site at www.cpsc.gov

To Report an Unsafe Toy

- Call the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at 800.638.2772

Source: www.familydoctor.org