



For The Health Of It

December is National Safe Toys & Gifts Month

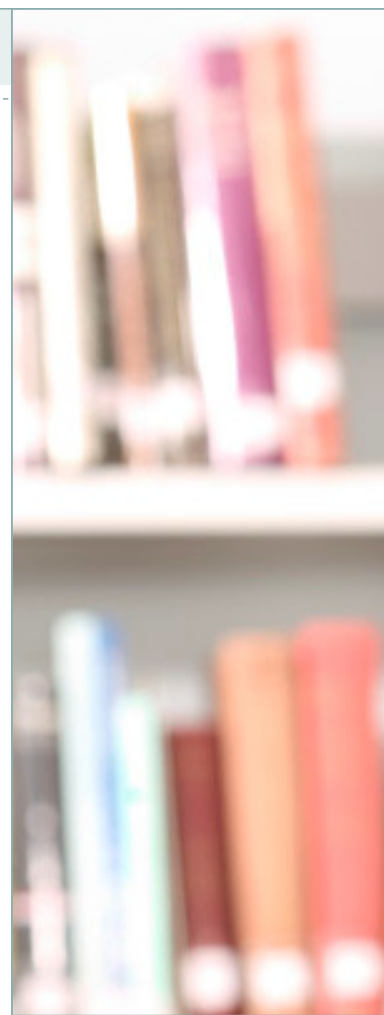
National Safe Toy and Gifts month is observed in December when holiday gift giving is at its peak. However, safe toys and gifts giving recommendations should be considered for birthdays other special events throughout the year.

What To Consider When Purchasing Toys and Gifts

According to Stanford Medicine Children’s Health website a large number of children are injured by toys when adults give their children toys that are not age appropriate.

- Always check the label to make sure the toy is age appropriate.
- Consider your child’s ability to play or operate a toy. Each child is unique so even a toy that might be listed as age appropriate could be to too much for your child.
- Does the toy have the American Society for Testing and Materials “ASTM” label? This means the toy meets national safety standards. Be sure to read any warning labels before buying toys.
- Watch out for small objects for children under 3. Toys with magnets and button batteries should not be given to young children because they often put objects into their mouths.
- Read all safety and assembly instructions and explain them to your child.
- Consider any extra safety equipment that might be needed. Helmets, knee/elbow pads are a good idea to give along with any ride-on gift.
- Inspect toys for solid construction and repair or discard any broken toys. Watch out for sharp edges and/or pinch /poke points.
- If a toy makes a lot of noise make sure to include ear protection or avoid buying the toy.
- If a toy “shoots” balls, darts or other projectiles teach children to never aim them at other kids (especially the face), Consider eye protection as part of the gift.
- Set safety rules for playing with a toy and make sure if your child has friends over they follow the same safety rules.
- Explain and demonstrate for your child how to correctly use a toy.

For more tips about Safe Toys & Gifts giving visit [Stanford Health Children’s Medicine](#)



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International Volunteer Day (IVD)

is celebrated on December 5th every year.

It is a day where volunteers are acknowledged and the spirit of volunteerism is promoted at the local, national and international levels.

The day is a unique opportunity for people and volunteer- involving organizations to work with government agencies, non-profit institutions, community groups, academia and the private sector- to further weave together values of compassion and solidarity.

World AIDS Day

Every year on December 1st, the world unites to commemorate World AIDS Day.

This annual event serves as a reminder of the global struggle to end HIV- related stigma, to honor those we have lost, and a rallying cry to continue working toward a day when HIV is no longer a public health threat.



WORLD AIDS DAY 35
Remember and Commit

**Buzzed
Driving Is
Drunk
Driving**

Did you know ?

- About 31% of all traffic crash fatalities in the US involve drunk drivers.
- In 2021, there were 13,384 people killed in these preventable crashes.
- Two of the most celebrated days of the year, Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve are among the most deadly. That's why **December** has been recognized as **National Impaired Driving Prevention Month**.
- **The legal alcohol concentration limit in all states is 0.08.** Research shows that for the majority of drivers, driving performance deteriorates significantly at this level.

Keeping all this information in mind, BE SMART and -

- ◆ Before taking the first drink, have a plan that includes a designated driver, a taxi or ride share, or an overnight stay at a friend's home.
- ◆ You need to know that **JUST A SINGLE DRINK** can cause a decline in visual function, mental judgement and motor skills, resulting in driver impairment.
- ◆ Drugs including opioids, marijuana and some over the counter medicines—can impair driving by causing drowsiness, altering visual functions and affecting mental judgement and motor skills.



Winter is the most wonderful time of the year! In order to enjoy a fun snow hot chocolate season; we need to do some pre- preparation for ourselves, our home, and our car. Some key tips to keep in mind –

Dress warmly and limit exposure to the cold to prevent frostbite. Avoid getting wet to prevent hypothermia.

For home:

- ◆ Insulate walls and attic.
- ◆ Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows.
- ◆ Have your chimney or flue cleaned and inspected every year.
- ◆ Install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors in your home. Make sure the batteries are working.
- ◆ Never leave lit candles or other flames unattended.
- ◆ Bring your pets indoors as temperatures drop!

For car: Make sure your car is ready for winter travel.

- 1) Make a winter emergency kit to keep in your car. The kit should include-
 - Cell phone, portable charger, and extra batteries.
 - Extra hats, coats, mittens, blankets or sleeping bags.
 - Food and water.
 - Compass and maps.
 - Flashlight battery- powered radio and extra batteries.
 - First- aid kit.
 - Plastic bags (for sanitation).
 - Booster cables, flares, tire pump and a bag of sand or cat little (for traction).
 - ◇ Check antifreeze level and have radiator system serviced.
 - ◇ Replace worn tires and check tire air pressure regularly.
 - ◇ Keep gas tank full to avoid ice in tank and fuel lines.

Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Day

December 12 is celebrated annually as UHC day.

The day aims to raise awareness of the need for strong and resilient health systems and universal health coverage.

UHC means that everyone, everywhere, should have access to the health services they need without risk of financial hardship.

It includes the full range of essential health services, spanning health promotion, prevention and treatment.



National Handwashing Awareness Week December 3-9

Washing your hands is easy—and it's one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of germs. Studies have shown that hand washing can prevent 1 in 3 diarrhea-related illnesses and 1 in 5 respiratory infections, such as a cold or the flu. Follow these five steps every time.

1. **Wet** your hands with clean, running water, turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Sing the ABC's!
4. **Rinse** your hands well under clean, running water.
5. **Dry** your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. For more information on how clean hands save lives, visit www.cdc.gov/handwashing.

Your hands carry germs you can't see



Wash your hands



WINTER BLUES OR SAD

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is more than just a seasonal “funk”. SAD is a very real type of depression most commonly associated with the fall and winter months. As the weather changes and the days are darker, many people may notice changes to their moods. This time of year it is important to keep in mind symptoms of SAD.

Symptoms include:

- low energy
- depressed mood
- hopelessness
- irritability or anxiety
- poor concentration
- social withdrawal
- changes in sleep and/or appetite
- loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed



What can you do about it?

- Structure. Go to bed at a regular time, and get enough rest. Give focus to eating healthy meals on a regular schedule.
- Make your environment brighter when you can. Open blinds, and sit closer to bright windows. Consider investing in a light box.
- Get outside. Go for a walk, take your lunch outside, take short breaks throughout your day and enjoy the sunshine.
- Exercise. A regular exercise routine can help with stress relief, and being more fit can help to increase self esteem. Plus, exercise increases levels in your brain of the same chemicals used in antidepressant medications!
- Socialize. Connect with the people you enjoy being around.
- Take a trip. Make an effort to plan for vacations during the winter months when possible.

We all have tough days and times when life presents us with an increase in overall stress. It's ok to have a bad day. However, SAD is a type of depression. If your symptoms do not improve, or even worsen, it is important to reach out to your health care provider. Treatment options can include working with a therapist or certain medications.

NATIONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION WEEK

December 4th marks the beginning of National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW)! This week is a critical opportunity to remind everyone 6 months and older that there's still time to protect themselves and their loved ones from flu this season. How? By getting their annual flu vaccine if they have not already! [CDC data](#) shows that flu vaccination coverage was lower last season, especially among certain higher risk groups, such as pregnant people and children. When you get a flu vaccine, you reduce your risk of illness, and flu-related hospitalization if you do get sick. This week is meant to remind people that there is still time to benefit from the first and most important action in [preventing flu illness and potentially serious flu complications](#): get a flu vaccine today!



#FIGHT FLU



HOLIDAY SAFETY

The holidays are a time to reconnect with family and friends, but they also present seasonal safety hazards. Here are some tips to help you keep your home and family safe this holiday season.

Holiday Decorating Tips

During the holiday season, there is an average of around 160 decorating related injuries daily — half of those injuries are associated with falls. Here are some tips to make your holiday decorating safer:

- Never use furniture as a ladder.
- Follow the 1-to-4 rule for extension ladders: for every four feet the ladder rises, move the base out one foot from the structure.
- Always keep three points of contact on the ladder: two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand.
- Inspect the ladder for any damage prior to using it.
- Use the right ladder for the task at hand.

Electrical safety tips

U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated average of 160 home structure fires per year that began with the ignition of Christmas trees in 2016-2020. These fires caused an annual average of 2 civilian deaths, 11 civilian injuries, and \$12 million in direct property damage.

- Avoid electrical fires by purchasing lights from reputable retailers and only those approved by nationally recognized testing labs like UL, Intertek or CSA.
- Inspect both indoor and outdoor lights for broken sockets, frayed wires and loose connections.
- Don't overload outlets with too many electrical devices — this could cause a fire.

Fire Prevention Tips

Being aware of fire safety tips can have a big impact in helping keep your home safe during the holidays. Even with all the Christmas tree fires, cooking remains the leading cause of home fires and injuries. Many fires occur on Thanksgiving and Christmas day. Here are some holiday fire safety tips:

- Avoid using candles if possible. Consider battery-operated alternatives.
- Mantels are beautiful when covered with stockings and greenery. But these items are flammable. If you use your fireplace frequently, consider hanging these decorations somewhere else.
- Be sure to check the Christmas tree — make sure it has plenty of water and it isn't near heat sources.
- When cooking, pay close attention to what you're doing and your surroundings.
- Keep a fire extinguisher close by.
- Be sure you have smoke detectors at least 10 feet from your stove, and test them monthly.
- Educate yourself on kitchen safety.

Cooking and Dining Safety Tips

Just a few simple tips to keep the kitchen safer during the holidays include:

- Always have a cook in the kitchen.
- Don't leave stove burners or the oven unattended.
- Occupy the kids away from the kitchen — too many hot appliances and dangerous utensils.
- Keep prepared foods away from raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs.
- Cook food thoroughly, using a food thermometer to determine doneness.
- Internal food temperature should be 140 degrees Fahrenheit or above.
- Refrigerate food within two hours at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below.
- Ditch leftovers after 4 days.

**BE FIRE SAFE
THIS WINTER**
TEST SMOKE ALARMS AND
CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS
AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH.

Prevent accidental poisoning & choking

The risk of poisoning increases during the holiday period. This is a result of common household items, as well as carbon monoxide (CO).

Here are some tips to keep in mind:

- Be sure your child doesn't have access to dangerous plants. Mistletoe, holly berries and Jerusalem cherries can be poisonous if consumed in large amounts.
- Those small button batteries found in toys, remotes and the like, are VERY dangerous so make sure children don't swallow them.
- Tiny magnets are also dangerous if swallowed.
- Install safe and certified carbon monoxide detectors.





Holiday's and Mental Health Make It A Priority

When most people think of the holidays they envision families gathering, food, drinks, parties and laughter. However, for a significant number of people holidays bring about loneliness, stress, anxiety, depression and fear.

Many older adults may have had friends die and loved ones may not be able to visit due to work, travel distances or family obligations. A lack of social interaction can lead to loneliness and poor mental health.

For people of all ages stress and anxiety can be even higher during the holidays. Dealing with difficult family members, budgeting for and buying gifts, cooking, and party invites or lack of can raise a person's level of anxiety and stress.

People suffering from substance use disorders or people in recovery may experience increased levels of fear along with their stress and anxiety. The fear of being invited to or being in situations that may tempt them to misuse substances or to relapse while in recovery is real.

Children, teens and adults of all ages are also susceptible to depression during the holidays. Children and teens of split families may feel guilty about being with one parent over the other. Adults can have similar feelings if a relationship has not gone as planned. Not being able to afford gifts for family or friends can cause feelings of guilt and depression. Not being able to live up to yours or other's expectations is often a concern for people around the holidays.

So, what can we do to help ourselves and those we love to have happier holidays?

When we are not able to be physically close to ones we care about technology can help. Although not a perfect substitute setting up online gatherings can provide elderly people and families a chance to engage socially with one another. You can also volunteer at nursing homes, charities and senior centers to brighten someone's day.

Accept that things won't always go as planned. You're probably not going to have the perfect dinner. Something will burn or spill or break. Remind yourself that those small things are okay and may provide a happy memory in the future. Gifts are nice but reminding yourself that experiences last a lot longer than gifts can help when you aren't able to get everyone everything they want. And remember it is okay to say no if your calendar gets jammed with competing obligations.

It takes a community to help those suffering from substance use disorders and to keep those in recovery on task. Be aware if someone is in recovery or has a substance use disorder when planning a gathering. Don't make alcohol a focal point of the event and ask guests not to use drugs while in attendance. You could even make your party a sober party and not have any alcohol or other drugs allowed.

Remind yourself that you can't make everyone happy. Control what you can control and make time for self-care. If you find yourself struggling over the holidays reach out to someone you trust or contact Ny Project Hope. Call or text 988 or chat at 988lifeline.org .

Wishing you and your family a healthy and happy holiday season.

The Staff @ Warren County Health Services



Mental health has intrinsic and instrumental value, helping us to connect, function, cope and thrive



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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