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Prevent Blindness America Urges Holiday Shoppers to Keep Safe Toys and Gifts At The Top of Their List This Year

Non-profit Group Provides Tips on How to Purchase Safe Toys and Gifts for Kids

CHICAGO (Nov. 16, 2012) – Thanks to online sales and some retailers starting the holiday shopping season earlier every year, many gift-givers have already begun to purchase items to get a jump-start on their lists. But sometimes, the best deal may not be the safest. Prevent Blindness America, the nation's oldest non-profit eye health and safety group, wants everyone to make sure that all gifts purchased, especially for children, are safe.

In 2010, the [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission \(CPSC\)](#) estimated that hospital emergency rooms across the country treated 251,700 toy-related injuries. And, 72 percent of those injuries were to those under the age of 15.

“In order to spend the holidays with family and friends, instead of in the emergency room, we must be diligent in making sure our children are protected,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “We all need to make a conscious effort to think about the gifts we are buying to make sure they are appropriate for every child’s age and development level.”

Prevent Blindness America has declared December as Safe Toys and Gifts Month in an effort to help adults make the best decisions on how to keep the holiday season joyful for everyone. The group is offering toy-buying and gift-giving tips to all those planning to purchase a gift for a child this year.

Prevent Blindness America suggests:

- Make recommendations to family members and friends about gifts that you feel are appropriate for your child. Be diligent about inspecting these gifts before allowing your child to play with them.
- Inspect all toys before purchasing. Monitor toys that your child has received as gifts to make sure they are appropriate for your child’s age and developmental level.

- For younger children, avoid play sets with small magnets and make sure batteries are secured within the toy. If magnets or batteries are ingested, serious injuries and/or death can occur.
- Gifts of sports equipment should always be accompanied by protective gear (such as a basketball along with eye goggles or a face guard with a new batting helmet for baseball or softball).
- Any toy that is labeled “supervision required” must always be used in the presence of an adult. Keep toys meant for older children away from younger ones.
- Always save the warranties and directions for every toy. If possible, include a gift receipt. Repair or throw away damaged toys.
- Avoid toys that shoot or include parts that fly off.
- Inspect toys for sturdiness. Your child’s toys should be durable, with no sharp edges or points. The toys should also withstand impact. Dispose of plastic wrapping material immediately on toys as they may have sharp edges.
- Don’t give toys with small parts to young children. Young kids tend to put things in their mouths, increasing the risk of choking. If the part of a toy can fit in a toilet paper roll, the toy is not appropriate for children under the age of 3.
- Do not purchase toys with long strings or cords, especially for infants and very young children as this can become wrapped around a child’s neck.
- Always dispose of uninflated or broken balloons immediately. According to the CPSC, more children have suffocated from them than any other type of toy.

For more information on safe toys and gifts for children as well as general children’s eye health topics, please contact Prevent Blindness America by calling (800) 331-2020 or visit preventblindness.org.

About Prevent Blindness America

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates and regional offices, Prevent Blindness America is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-

saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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