



Ensure holiday gatherings are safe and poison free for kids

The holiday season is here, and it can be a joyous time for kids and adults. It's also a time when decorating, entertaining and festivities can distract from child safety. Here are some poison-prevention safety tips to keep in mind when celebrating with family and friends this holiday season.

When hosting holiday guests:

- **Keep guests' purses, coats and suitcases out of reach.** Visitors may carry medication, cigarettes or cigars, perfume or aftershave that kids could easily get into. Keep all of these products out of the reach of children.
- **Keep an eye on children.** Even with many adults in a house, a child could drink a glass filled with an alcoholic beverage or place a small object, such as an ornament, in his or her mouth.
- **Clean up the leftovers.** Don't leave out food or half-filled glasses to clean up the next day when there are children around. Children of all ages can wake up early and ingest leftover foods and alcoholic drinks.

When cooking:

- **Keep common baking ingredients such as vanilla and almond extract out of reach.** They contain high levels of alcohol and may be harmful to young children if swallowed.
- **Prepare turkey safely.** It's important to properly defrost it or buy fresh. Allocate 24 hours of defrosting per 5 lbs. of turkey and remember to defrost it in the refrigerator – not the kitchen counter.
- **Enjoy the leftovers, but be sure to store them properly.** It's very important to store your leftovers in shallow containers so they cool faster in the refrigerator.
- **Clean up the right way.** When preparing meals, clean your hands with warm, soapy water 20 seconds before and after food handling. Also, wash surfaces in contact with food in hot, soapy water after preparation.

When decorating:

- **Be aware of ornaments and wrappings.** Antique or foreign-made ornaments may be decorated with lead-based paint. Most wrapping paper and ribbons are nontoxic, but foil, colored gift wrap, icicles and tinsel also may contain lead or tin.
- **Watch holiday plants.** Dangerous holiday plants include: azalea, bittersweet, Christmas rose, crown of thorns, Jerusalem or jimson weed, holly and mistletoe berries. For additional poisonous plant information, visit wisconsinpoison.org.
- **Keep tree preservatives out of reach.** Although commercial Christmas tree preservatives usually contain a concentrated sugar solution and are considered nontoxic, some solutions contain aspirin or bleach and can be potentially harmful if swallowed.
- **Stay away from decorative artificial snow.** Some snow sprays can cause lung irritation.

For any poison question, call Wisconsin Poison Center toll-free at 1-800-222-1222.

