



# WELLNESS INITIATIVE NOW

To promote personal well-being, fitness and nutrition for all TDCJ employees.

December 2008

It is that time of year again when the holiday toy shopping rush gets into full swing. Parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles will try to make the season special by giving the perfect gift. Do you know what toys are safe for your children? Not every toy on your child's wish list is the safest. Sharp or pointed edges, small removable parts and even pull strings longer than seven inches can pose a health threat to small children.

In fact, the Consumer Product Safety Commission states there were 210,300 toy related injuries treated in United States emergency rooms in 2005. Contusions and abrasions accounted for sixty-four percent of those injuries, with the remainder being chemical burns, foreign bodies, lacerations, punctures, hemorrhages, dermatitis, conjunctivitis and other diagnoses.

Toy injuries can happen in a variety of ways, including poor construction, age inappropriate toys and incorrect usage. Many times, injuries occur by simply tripping over toys or by younger siblings playing with toys that are not intended for them when their parents are not looking.

We are proud to celebrate Safe Toys and Gifts Month along with The National Safe Kids Campaign and the National Safety Council. Here are some tips for selecting safe toys for children:

- Consider the child's age, interest and skill level. Look for quality design and

construction, and follow age and safety recommendations on labels.

- Use a small parts tester to determine whether small toys may present a choking hazard to children under age three. Small parts testers can be purchased at toy or baby specialty stores or you can use the cardboard core of a toilet paper roll, if a toy can pass through, it is too small for young children and may cause them to choke if swallowed.
- Avoid toys, with sharp points or edges, toys that produce loud noises, and projectiles (such as darts).
- Avoid toys with strings, straps or cords longer than seven inches that may pose a risk for strangulation for young children.
- Avoid electrical toys with heating elements for children under age eight.
- Avoid cap guns that use caps that can be ignited by the slightest friction and can cause serious burns.

Consider the facts:

- Falls and choking cause most toy related deaths and injuries in children. Choking alone causes one third of all toy related deaths- most often from balloons.
- Children four years old and younger, account for almost half of all toy related injuries and almost all deaths.
- Children younger than age three are at the greatest risk of choking because they tend to put objects, especially toys, in their mouths.