

## Awareness Health and Safety Article for December



No one chooses gifts with the intent to harm, but some popular children's toys can cause serious injuries.



APPROXIMATELY  
**217,000** children are treated  
at hospital  
emergency rooms for toy-related injuries

### ***Did you know:***

- 1) Riding toys are responsible for the majority of toy injuries among children ages 14 and under
- 2) About half of all toy-related injuries occur to the head and face area
- 3) Children under age three are at greater risk for choking on toys than older children, due to their tendency to put everything in their mouths. In addition, the upper airways of children under age three are smaller than those of older children

According to the *Consumer Product Safety Commission*, there were more than 250,000 toy-related injuries treated in U.S. emergency rooms in 2014; nearly **three quarters** of those injured were children under age 15.

Almost half of these injuries affect the head or face. In fact, about 1 in 10 children's eye injuries treated in the ER trace back to toys.

A serious eye injury from a toy can ruin a family's holiday and, more seriously leave a child with permanent vision loss. During this holiday season, the American Academy of Ophthalmology is reminding parents about the dangers that toys may pose to children's eyes and offers its top five tips on how to choose safe toys for gift giving.

**OTHER CAUSES OF TOY-RELATED DEATHS INCLUDE CHOKING, DROWNING, SUFFOCATION, AND RIDING TOY ACCIDENTS**

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## TOY SAFETY

- Along with sports equipment, give children the appropriate **protective eyewear** with polycarbonate lenses. Check with your Eye M.D. to learn about protective gear recommended for your child's sport.
- Keep toys that are made for older children away from younger children.
- If your child experiences an eye injury from a toy, seek immediate medical attention from an ophthalmologist – an eye medical doctor.



**TOYS AND GAMES ARE TONS OF FUN FOR KIDS AND ADULTS. WHETHER YOUR KIDS ARE WORKING ON A PUZZLE, PLAYING WITH BUILDING BLOCKS OR EVEN INVENTING THEIR OWN GAMES, HERE ARE A FEW THINGS TO THINK ABOUT TO HELP THEM STAY SAFER AND HAVE A BLAST.**

*“When the gift-giving and celebratory spirit of the holidays is in full swing, we can forget how easily kids can get injured when playing with certain toys,”* said Jane C. Edmond M.D., a clinical spokesperson for the

American Academy of Ophthalmology. *“We hope people will take steps to shop and play responsibly this year. Following these tips can help make sure our little loved ones have healthy vision for many holiday seasons to come.”*

### **Tips For The Season:**

1. **Beware of airsoft, BB guns, and other projectile toys.** Every year ophthalmologists treat thousands of patients with devastating eye injuries caused by seemingly safe toys. Avoid items with sharp, protruding or projectile parts such as airsoft guns, BB guns and other non-powder gun-related foreign objects can easily propel into the sensitive tissue of the eye.
2. **Never allow children to play with high-powered laser pointers.** A number of recent reports in the United States and internationally show that children have sustained serious eye injuries by playing with high-powered lasers (between 1500 and 6000 mill watts). Over the years, these lasers have become increasingly more powerful, with enough potential to cause severe retinal damage, with just seconds of laser exposure to the eye. The FDA advises the public to never aim or shine a laser pointer at anyone and to not buy laser pointers for children.
3. **Read labels for age recommendations before you buy.** To select appropriate gifts suited for a child's age, look for and follow the age recommendations and instructions about proper assembly, use, and supervision.
4. **Don't just give presents. Make sure to be present.** Always make sure an adult is supervising when children are playing with potentially hazardous toys or games that could cause an eye injury.
5. **Know what to do (and what not to).** If someone you know experiences an eye injury, seek immediate medical attention from an ophthalmologist. As you wait for medical help, make sure to never to touch, rub, apply pressure, or try to remove any object stuck in the eye. If an eye injury occurs follow these important care and treatment guidelines.

**IN 2011, 188,400**

children under the age of 15 years were seen in emergency departments for toy-related injuries. That's 516 kids every day. More than a third of those injured were children 5 and under.



### **What To Do For An Eye Injury:**

- ***For all eye injuries:***
  - DO NOT touch, rub or apply pressure to the eye.
  - DO NOT try to remove the object stuck in the eye.
  - Do not apply ointment or medication to the eye.
  - See a doctor as soon as possible, preferably an ophthalmologist.
  
- ***If your eye has been cut or punctured:***
  - Gently place a shield over the eye. The bottom of a paper cup taped to the bones surrounding the eye can serve as a shield until you get medical attention.
  - DO NOT rinse with water.
  - DO NOT remove the object stuck in eye.
  - DO NOT rub or apply pressure to eye.
  - Avoid giving aspirin, ibuprofen or other non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs. These drugs thin the blood and may increase bleeding.
  - After you have finished protecting the eye, see a physician immediately.
  
- ***If you get a particle or foreign material in your eye:***
  - DO NOT rub the eye.
  - Lift the upper eyelid over the lashes of your lower lid.
  - Blink several times and allow tears to flush out the particle.

- If the particle remains, keep your eye closed and seek medical attention.
- ***In case of a chemical burn to the eye:***
  - Immediately flush the eye with plenty of clean water
  - Seek emergency medical treatment right away

[https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/pediatrics/toy\\_safety\\_injury\\_statistics\\_and\\_incidence\\_rates\\_90,P03000](https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/healthlibrary/conditions/pediatrics/toy_safety_injury_statistics_and_incidence_rates_90,P03000)

[https://www.safekids.org/safetytips/field\\_risks/toy-safety?gclid=Cj0KCQiAuZXQBRDKARIsAMwpUeSNHlnSolsUs5xrwoylqVzM8xNZ-IvuADyHjo8M\\_2V-w9S3osgzpWkaAnAnEALw\\_wcB](https://www.safekids.org/safetytips/field_risks/toy-safety?gclid=Cj0KCQiAuZXQBRDKARIsAMwpUeSNHlnSolsUs5xrwoylqVzM8xNZ-IvuADyHjo8M_2V-w9S3osgzpWkaAnAnEALw_wcB)

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/safe-toys.html>

<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/news/buying-safe-toys>

<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/poll-would-you-buy-these-your-child>

<https://www.aao.org/eye-health/news/five-tips-to-avoid-toy-related-eye-injuries>

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