

Holiday Movies are Full of Safety Messages

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Emergencies don't stop during the winter holiday season. In fact, many injuries and incidents, from heart attacks to cooking fires, increase between November and January.

Watching Christmas movies is one of my holiday traditions and I've realized that several of my favorite movies contain safety messages. I hope these movies and their risk reduction tips resonate with you and your families.

A Christmas Story. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. 1983.

It's so important to buy age-appropriate gifts for children (and adults). A gift in the wrong hands can lead to injured eyes, bonked heads, choking, burns, and other injuries.

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation. Hughes Entertainment. 1989.

This movie is ripe with safety messages including making good choices when decorating your homes and businesses with holiday lights. Strings of holiday lights are not designed for permanent installations and make sure the lights outside are designed for outside conditions.

The Ref. Touchstone Pictures and Don Simpson/Jerry Bruckheimer Films. 1994.

During a dinner scene in this movie, actors wear wreaths with burning candles on their heads in honor of Santa Lucia. That's not a good idea. Candles should only be used on solid, noncombustible surfaces and remember to blow out each candle before you go out of the room.

Die Hard. Gordon Company and Silver Pictures. 1988.

It's easy to take your feet for granted. Wear socks to keep your feet warm and shoes that stabilize your ankles and provide good traction on slippery surfaces.

Elf. New Line Cinema. 2003.

Sugar! While there tends to be plenty of candy, candy canes, candy corns, and syrup available during the holidays, remember to eat a balanced diet from the mainstream food groups, too. A balanced diet helps prevent diabetes, heart attacks, strokes, and general malaise.

Last Holiday. ImageMovers. 2006.

There are so many distractions during the holidays that even an open cabinet door can lead to an injury. Instead of wearing a helmet 24/7, be aware of your surroundings and fix potential hazards before an injury occurs.

Joyeux Noël. Sony Pictures Classics. 2005.

The holidays have a magical way of adding stress to our lives, whether it's a rush of Black Friday shopping or discussions at the dinner table. This movie reminds us to give it a rest – Let It Go, to reference Disney's Frozen (2013) – during the holidays. Grant your family members and yourself grace and stop the battles at least for a few hours.

It's a Wonderful Life. Liberty Films. 1946.

On a related note, mental wellness is important throughout the year and especially during these winter holidays. If you, a loved one, or coworker is hurting from anxiety, depression, or other ailments, reach out to a therapist, a faith leader, a confidant, suicide prevention helplines such as 1-800-273-8255, or even 911 if you are having an emergency.

Finally, I hope we can all consider a modified message from *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!* (Cat in the Hat Productions 1966). COVID-19 will certainly change plans for most of us, but it can't stop Christmas, Chanukah, Kwanzaa, or any other winter holiday from coming. Be safe out there and visit www.southmetro.org for other safety tips.