



SEASONAL HEALTH ALERT

Issued: December 6, 2018 For: Public Health Districts, Legislators and Media

Questions, contact WAPC, 24/7/365, by calling: 1 (800) 222-1222.

Media contact: Jennifer Monteleone, jmonteleone@wapc.org.

Tips to Avoid Holiday Hazards

The holidays are a wonderful time of year, with parties, gift giving, guests, and travel to see loved ones. The holidays also create opportunities for poisonings and toxic exposures, especially in children. The Washington Poison Center offers these helpful tips to keep your holidays merry, bright, and healthy.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE AND HEALTHY

- **Make sure all gifts, even if wrapped, are safe for children** – watch for button batteries, the small cylindrical batters found in watches, hearing aids, and keychain flashlights. If swallowed, button batteries can cause internal bleeding, and even death.
- **Monitor where holiday lights are placed when children are present** – children are drawn towards sparkling lights, and have a tendency to put lights in their mouths. Be extra careful with bubble lights, as the liquid can cause burns, irritation, and carbon monoxide exposure.
- **Place mistletoe and holly berries up high and out of reach** – the toxins in mistletoe and holly berries may lead to nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and abdominal pain.
- **Keep open alcoholic beverages out of the reach of children** – alcohol can have strong effects on a child's nervous system – even in small amounts. After your holiday party is complete, always be vigilant and clean up leftover alcoholic beverages immediately.
- **When guests come to stay** – provide a safe place to store coats, purses, and luggage that may have medicine, vitamins, and other potentially poisonous substances inside.
- **If your family is traveling** – keep prescription and over the counter medicines in child-resistant containers, not plastic zip lock bags or pill keepers.
- **Contrary to popular folklore** – poinsettias are nearly harmless if ingested.



The Washington Poison Center is always here to help, 24/7/365 by calling:
1 (800) 222-1222. All calls are free and confidential.