



# SEASONAL HEALTH ALERT

## Holiday Hazards

*Issued: December 2021*

Contact WAPC at [mryuk@wapc.org](mailto:mryuk@wapc.org) with questions

The holidays are a wonderful time of year. But, they also create opportunities for poisonings and toxic exposures—especially in children. The Washington Poison Center offers these helpful tips to keep your days merry, bright, and healthy.

- **Make sure all gifts, even if wrapped, are safe for children.** Watch for button batteries, the small cylindrical batteries found in watches, hearing aids, and keychain flashlights. If swallowed, button batteries can cause burns, internal bleeding, swelling of the airway, and even death.
- **Monitor holiday lights 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. Call the poison center at 1(800) 222-1222 if holly berries or mistletoe are ingested.
- **Keep open alcoholic beverages and cannabis (marijuana) out of the reach of children.** Alcohol and cannabis can have strong effects on a child, even in small amounts. Clean up leftover alcoholic beverages immediately. Always store alcohol and cannabis out of sight and reach of children, preferably locked up.
- If you are traveling, **keep prescription and over-the-counter medicines in child-resistant containers**, not plastic zip lock bags or pill keepers. Keep these containers out of sight and out of reach of children.
- Contrary to popular folklore, **poinsettias are not poisonous.** Ingestion may irritate the mouth, stomach, or skin, but will likely not cause severe symptoms.
- Wash hands and sanitize often, but keep cleaners and sanitizing products (including hand sanitizer) **out of reach and out of sight** of any small children.
- **Keep pets safe** from holiday hazards, as well. If you think a pet has ingested something potentially toxic, contact the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at (888) 426-4435.