



December 2011
By Rachel Hudak

Tips for a safe and happy holiday season

Each year between Halloween and the first of January as parents we all feel it...It's the busy, fun, exciting, and sometimes stressful season of the holidays. We are pulled in multiple directions. School events are in full swing, there are social functions to attend, multiple holidays to observe and celebrate, gifts to find, and special holiday dishes to make.

Keeping a *somewhat* normal schedule

It's often difficult, but keeping a somewhat normal schedule can help minimize the very common issues that come along with the busy holiday season.

- Keeping semi-normal bed times and morning routines can help with the often common temper tantrums and changes in behavior that can occur with a sudden change in schedule.
- Environments are often festive and children may find it difficult to adhere to parental expectation
- No one would suggest taking the fun out of a special holiday, but avoiding the temptation to throw all routines and familiar stabilities out the window over winter break for example may help when school resumes and the routine is back.

Decoration Safety

If you celebrate the holiday season with candles, trees, plants, extra lighting indoors and out, and you have young children or young children will be visiting your home, keep things safe.

- Make sure that outlets are not over loaded. More power to you if you want to replicate Clark Griswold's lighting display – but avoid overloading a single outlet or a single power strip. Always follow the manufacturer's directions.
- Take care to put candles in a safe place well out of arm's reach for children. Remember to extinguish flames properly before everyone goes to bed or leaves the home.
- Be sure that poisonous plants like poinsettias are out of reach for young children and animals.



Tree Decorations

If you celebrate the holidays by putting a tree in your home with lights and ornaments, below are some safety tips:

- If you have a live tree, make sure to keep it well watered. A dry pine tree can present a serious fire hazard.
- Breakable and fragile ornaments or decorations need to be out of reach from children. Little ones that crawl, early walkers, and curious preschoolers are sure to find the decorations you hope they won't.
- Keep the surface your tree is resting on sturdy and level. An unsteady tree can topple over and injure someone.
- Use outlet covers for the outlets you are not using at the moment. It takes seconds for a toddler to find an object that is just perfect to stick into a live outlet.

Nutrition Still Matters!

The holiday season brings festive treats, drinks, and other goodies. Taking part in the fun and food is fine, but try to limit the sugar intake. The saying, "Everything in moderation" is applicable during the holiday season.

For example:

- If your child is looking forward to grandma's famous sugar cookies or her chocolate cake with a side of ice cream, allow it in moderation.
- Water is a perfectly acceptable beverage.
- For a child that has special dietary needs, try to find an alternative that he or she can safely consume.
- Do not omit the good foods from your child's diet.
- Eat veggies and nutritious foods first, then a taste of the sweets.
- Make sure older children stay out of the eggnog or holiday "spirits". Alcohol is dangerous for children and the occasional teen or "tween" who is curious could find them selves quite ill if alcohol is consumed.



Enjoy this holiday season!