The holiday shopping season is nearly upon us. With the flurry of activity that surrounds us this time of year, it is important to take the time to consider safety when selecting toys and gifts for children.

**The facts**
- About 700 children a day are treated in emergency rooms for toy-related injuries.
- More than a third of toy-related injuries are in children ages 4 and under.
- Most injuries from toys are minor cuts, scrapes and bruises. However, toys can cause serious injury or even death. This happens when toys are dangerous or used in the wrong way.

**Top tips for toy-related safety**
- Before selecting a gift or purchasing a toy or game for kids:
  - Consider the child’s age and development level.
  - Read labels and follow manufacturer’s recommended age for the toy or game.
  - Be especially alert to small pieces that may be a choking hazard for young children.
  - Remember any safety gear to go along with the item, such as a helmet for a bike.
- After playtime is over, store toys in a designated location such as a bin or shelf.
  - Make sure there are no holes or hinges in a toy chest that could catch little fingers.
  - Keep toys and games for older children separated from those for younger ones.
  - Keep button battery-controlled devices out of sight and reach of small children. These include remote controls, singing greeting cards, read-along books and other toys that require small batteries.
  - Mail in product registration card on new toys so the manufacturer can contact you if the item is ever recalled.
- Tips for secondhand toys:
  - Visit www.cpsc.gov to make sure the toy has not been recalled for safety reasons.
  - Used toys should be in good condition with all original parts and packaging.
  - Stay informed about harmful products in the marketplace by signing up to receive product recall notices.
  - www.recalls.gov
November marks the beginning of heavy travel as families and friends gather for the holidays. Whether you and your family are going by plane, train, boat or automobile, remember to keep safety in mind for each member of your family.

The facts
- Holiday travel is a time when there is a risk of injuries in a variety of areas.
- Road injuries are the leading cause of preventable deaths and injuries to children.
- Correctly used child safety seats can reduce the risk of death by as much as 71 percent.

Top 10 holiday tips
1. Check your car seat before holiday travel. Be familiar with the child safety restraint laws in the state you will be traveling to (or through).
2. Bulky coats and car seats don’t mix. If it’s cold outside, cover babies and young children with a thick blanket to keep them warm, after they’re strapped securely into their seat. Bulky winter clothes and coats can keep a car seat harness from doing its job.
3. Use booster seats and the backseat. Kids who have outgrown a forward-facing harness seat are not ready for a seat belt or front seat yet. They are safest in a booster seat that enables the adult seat belt to fit properly. Even when children have transitioned from booster seats, they should remain in the back seat until they reach the age of 13.
4. Have an exit strategy for fussy kids. When you hear the all too familiar howl that means “I want food” or “change my diaper,” don’t worry about making good time. Instead, get off at the next exit and find a safe area to feed or change your child.
5. Remember the car seat for air travel. If traveling by air, use a car seat that is labeled “certified for use in motor vehicles and aircraft.” For babies and toddlers, this is the safest way to travel.
6. Keep medicines and small objects out of sight. Before arriving at your destination, talk to friends and relatives about being extra careful to keep small objects away from young kids. This includes medications, which can look like candy, button batteries, and other objects that are small enough for children to swallow.
7. Engage older kids in cooking. It can be fun to get kids involved holiday meal prep. It’s also a great chance to teach them kitchen safety tips.
8. Double check fireplace screens. Check to see if the home you’re visiting has any fireplaces and make sure they’re protected by a sturdy screen. Keep little ones away from this area.
9. Plan for safe sleep and more. Make sure your baby has a safe place to sleep such as a portable pack-n-play. It’s great time to check that where you’re staying has a working carbon monoxide alarm and smoke alarm.
10. Wear proper gear for winter sports. Send kids outside in the cold with proper gear such as helmets when they’re skiing, snowboarding or playing ice hockey.

For more information, contact Safe Kids at 859-323-1153 or visit www.safekidsfayettecounty.com.

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