

Christmas Trees

If buying an artificial tree, look for the **fire-resistant label**. When putting it up, keep it away from fireplaces, radiators and other sources of heat. Never use electric lights on metallic trees.

A fresh tree will stay green longer and be less of a fire hazard than a dry tree. To check for freshness, remember:

- A fresh tree is green. Fresh needles are hard to pull from branches.
- When bent between your fingers, fresh needles do not break.
- The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin.
- When the trunk of a tree is bounced on the ground, a shower of falling needles shows that tree is too dry.
- Place tree away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources. Heated rooms dry trees out rapidly, creating fire hazards.
- Cut off about two inches of the trunk to expose fresh wood for better water absorption. Keep the stand filled with water while the tree is indoors.
- Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways. Use thin guide-wires to secure a large tree to walls or ceiling.



Check Christmas Gifts Twice

During the Christmas season, high on many parents' **"to-do" list** is finishing up Christmas shopping. In addition to the chaos of battling crowds and parking, trying to find the best online deal, or taking in to consideration a child's wish list, many have an overwhelming amount of questions when it comes to gift giving:



- What is right for the child's age or development?
- Should I get an electronic device or something simple?
- Is what I'm buying safe?
- Is this toy educational?

- **Choose a gift that is age and developmentally appropriate.** The biggest tip from the American Academy of Pediatrics is to choose a toy that matches the age, development and interests of the child. Most toys include a label with a recommended age range.
- **Don't forget safety equipment.** Bicycles should come with helmets and scooters, skates and skateboards should come with helmets and pads. Bicycle helmets are not appropriate for ATVs – they need off-road helmets.
- **Bigger can be better.** With young children, err on the side of caution when deciding between toys with large versus small pieces. All pieces should be larger than a child's mouth to prevent choking.
- **Choose wisely with batteries and electricity.** Much like magnets, small batteries (especially button/watch batteries) can lead to choking, burning or shock dangers if improperly secured. Securely latched toys with batteries are much safer and a better option for children under 10. Any toy that must be plugged into an electrical outlet can lead to electric shock or injury. Any electrical toys should be labelled as UL approved.
- **Avoid airborne gifts.** Toys and gifts intended to be shot into the air, such as model rockets, or those powered by air, such as drones, can lead to serious eye injuries or pose dangers from above. If you buy them, just make sure they are used safely, with supervision, and are age-appropriate.
- **Quality matters.** Regardless of the specific gift, always check to make sure that the gift is well made. Poor stitching on buttons, zippers or clothing, as well thin or poorly-made plastic can be prone to breaking. This can lead to gifts becoming unintentional choking hazards or pieces that are sharp and may harm a child.