

## Health4Families Programme (H4FP) Factsheet – Child Safety

### When is a toy not a toy?

With Christmas fast approaching the Child Health Improvement Team would like you to share these important safety messages with parents and carers to ensure a happy and safe Christmas for all children.

#### Answer: When the toy is meant for an older child

- Age warning symbols show that a toy is not safe for a child under three years, usually because they contain small parts that may choke a baby
- Clear up burst balloons as they are a choking hazard for small children
- Avoid mixing old and new batteries in toys as the old one may overheat
- Most accidents with toys happen when children and adults trip over them, serious accidents happen when toys are left on the stairs



#### Answer: When it is a Christmas novelty

Toys are governed by regulations to protect young children from choking; however Christmas novelties such as tree decorations are not toys and are therefore not governed by the strict toy regulations.

Children under 36 months are at greatest risk, as the Christmas novelty may have parts a child could easily pull off and be at risk of choking.



#### Answer: When it contains an unsecured battery

Batteries in children's toys are covered by safety regulations and should be securely enclosed.

**Button batteries** are found in everyday items including toys, animated Christmas decorations and musical greeting cards. If a button battery is swallowed, the electrical charge creates caustic soda inside the body which can burn a hole through the throat and major blood vessels with catastrophic results.

#### How to keep children safe?

- Keep products with button batteries out of reach if the battery compartment isn't secured with a screw
- Keep batteries out of children's reach and sight, ideally in a high-up, lockable cupboard
- Buy toys from reputable retailers
- Teach older children that button batteries are dangerous and not to play with them or give them to younger brothers and sisters.

#### If you suspect a child has swallowed a button battery, act fast.

- Take them straight to the A&E department or dial 999 for an ambulance
- Tell the doctor that you think the child has swallowed a button battery
- Do not let them eat or drink
- Do not make them sick
- Do not wait to see if any symptoms develop.



## Resources:

- [ROSPA](#) Keeping kids safe – Information and advice
- [ROSPA - toy safety advice](#)
- [ROSPA- Christmas novelties](#)
- [Child Accident Prevention Trust](#) Information and advice
- Child Health Improvement Team website - [www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/wschit](http://www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/wschit) - Resource list, key messages.

## Training:

- **Health4Families Programme Team Child Accident Prevention E-Learning** - For the Children's Workforce giving an overview of the main causes of child accidents linked to child development including public health measures to reduce the incidence of child accidents. Accessible on the intranet sites of Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust and West Sussex County Council via line managers
- **E-learning for Healthcare** (NHS staff). Healthy Child Programme Module 10. Child accident prevention. - A brief overview highlighting key points <http://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/healthy-child-programme/>
- **Institute of Health Visiting E-learning:** Child Accident Prevention – Two modules providing an update of knowledge and skills. <http://ihv.org.uk/for-health-visitors/resources/e-learning/>

## References:

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- Public Health England. (2017). *Preventing unintentional injuries: A guide to all staff working with children under five years*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/unintentional-injuries-prevention-in-children-under-5-years>