

## HOLIDAY SAFETY TIPS

The holiday season is a time of celebration and togetherness—when families and friends come together to share love and laughter and create cherished memories. However, amid all the festivities, it's essential to be aware of potential hazards that pose risks to your safety and well-being. From fire hazards to cork-popping accidents and health concerns, here is valuable information to help you and yours stay safe and healthy during the holiday season.

### Watch out for cuts from opening gifts or decorating

Accidents involving knives or scissors while opening gifts or decorating can result in serious injuries. To prevent cuts:

- Use sharp blades that are easier to control.
- Keep your other hand away from the cutting area.
- Cut with the blade facing away from your body.

### Practice fire safety

One of the most significant concerns during the holidays is fire safety. Each year, US fire departments respond to an average of 790 structural fires due to holiday decorations, candles, and electrical mishaps. To ensure a safe and joyful holiday season, follow these precautions:

- Inspect holiday lights before use, replacing any damaged sets.
- Avoid piercing or damaging insulation when hanging lights.
- Turn off holiday lights when you leave the house or go to bed.
- Keep plugs away from puddles and snow, and never overload extension cords.
- Install working smoke alarms near sleeping areas.
- Keep candles at least 12 inches away from flammable materials.
- If you have a live tree, cut the trunk for better water absorption and water it daily.
- Place your tree at least three feet away from heat sources.

### Prevent falls

Falls are another common holiday hazard, with cluttered pathways and uneven surfaces leading to injuries. To prevent falls:

- Choose the right ladder for the job, ensuring it's the correct height and weight limit.
- Use stable placement and wear shoes with good traction when using a ladder.
- Clear pathways of trip hazards like clutter, power cords, or extra furniture.

- Fix uneven walkways and steps both inside and outside your home.
- Clear driveways and walkways of snow and ice.

### Take care of children and pets

Children and pets are more exposed to hazards during the holiday season. Keep them safe by:

- Keeping lighters, matches, cooking surfaces, and candles out of reach.
- Avoiding sharp or breakable decorations.
- Keeping trimmings with small parts out of reach.
- Avoiding decorations that resemble food.
- Being cautious with artificial snow sprays.
- Checking the labels of older decorations for lead content.

### Avoid accidental poisoning

Children, adults, and pets can ingest harmful substances during the holiday season. To prevent such incidents:

- Store toys with small parts, button batteries, and magnets safely.
- Keep medications in childproof containers out of children's reach.
- Be aware of which foods, plants, and decorations are toxic to pets.

### Be mindful of heart attack risks

Holiday stress, heavy meals, disrupted routines, extra physical activity, and cold temps can contribute to an increased risk of heart attacks during this season. To stay healthy:

- Celebrate in moderation and watch your salt intake.
- Pay attention to your body's signals and take time to relax.
- Familiarize yourself with the symptoms of a heart attack and call 911 if needed.

### Safely pop those corks

Champagne corks can be dangerous when they pop out of the bottle. To open a bottle safely:

- Make sure the bottle is chilled.
- Point the bottle away from others.
- Place a napkin or towel over the top.
- Hold the cork firmly and gently twist the base of the bottle.

### Prevent food poisoning

Improper food handling can lead to food poisoning during holiday gatherings. To avoid food-related illnesses:

- Cook food thoroughly using a food thermometer.
- Refrigerate perishable foods within two hours.
- Use pasteurized eggs in recipes containing raw eggs.

### Manage mental health and stress

The holidays are meant to be joyful, but they can also trigger depression and stress. Check in with loved ones and prioritize mental health by managing stress effectively. Give yourself a little selfcare this holiday

- Get enough sleep—prioritize getting to bed so you can rest and recharge throughout the holiday chaos.
- Get outside. Fresh air, sunshine (even behind clouds), and movement all help stave off the blues.
- Stay hydrated and nourish your body with healthful meals and snacks.
- Connect with friends and loved ones who fill your cup (instead of draining it dry).

While the holiday season is a time for celebration and happiness, it's crucial to remain vigilant about potential hazards. Following these safety tips and staying mindful of your surroundings can ensure a safe and joyful holiday season for you and your loved ones. Remember, the holidays are about creating memories, and safety should be a top priority to enjoy them to the fullest.

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