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CHILDREN'S HEALTH: TOY SAFETY

When purchasing toys for children, it is important to consider several safety factors. Toys should be age-appropriate, well-constructed, durable, and suited for each particular child's physical, mental and social capabilities.

Safety Regulations

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) sets mandatory toy safety regulations, as follows:

All Ages

- Electrical toys shouldn't have shock or thermal hazards.
- Toys shouldn't contain toxic materials.
- Toy paint should not contain traces of lead.
- Art materials used by children under 12 should be non-hazardous.
- Latex toys, games and balloons must contain warning labels regarding the choking and suffocation hazards.

Ages 3 to 6

- All toys and games with small parts must be labeled to warn of the choking hazards.
- All toys and games with balls less than 1.75 inches diameter must be labeled to warn of choking hazards.
- All toys and games with marbles must be labeled for choking hazards.

Under Age 8

- Electrically operated toys shouldn't have heating elements.
- No toys should have sharp points or edges.

Tips for Parents

Parents can take a number of steps to help reduce their child's risk for toy-related injuries:

- Make sure to refer to age and safety labels.
- Keep deflated balloons and broken balloon pieces away from children.
- Keep objects that can easily fit into a child's mouth out of reach.
- Read all toy warnings and instructions.
- Avoid purchasing toys with sharp or rigid points, spikes, rods and dangerous edges.
- Repair or replace any damaged or defective toys.
- Supervise children's craft projects, as scissors and glue are among the most dangerous products for children.

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