

Kosair Children's Hospital offers holiday safety tips

The holiday season is a wonderful time for children of all ages. But it's also a time to be extra careful with safety. Possible hazards include trees, lights, candles, decorations and new toys that are found everywhere during the holiday season.

"To a child, these new things are exciting and natural curiosity can lead to burns, choking and poisoning," said Erika Kravac, R.N., Children's Hospital Foundation Office of Child Advocacy of Kosair Children's Hospital. To keep your family safe, Kosair Children's Hospital and the Louisville and Jefferson County SAFE KIDS Coalition, a program of Kosair Children's Hospital, offers these seasonal safety suggestions:

Decorations and Trees

If you have a tree, anchor it firmly so your child can't pull it over. Trim lower branches to avoid eye injuries to small children. Be sure to place

ornaments high enough so that young children can't reach them.

"Broken ornaments can choke or cut," said Kravac. "And many older painted ornaments and tinsel contain lead that can cause poisoning."

Avoid using artificial snow sprays when decorating. They can cause lung irritation and should not be inhaled, particularly by children.

Dispose of colored wrapping paper immediately before it finds its way into little hands and mouths and avoid burning it in the fireplace — many dyes in the paper release poisonous fumes.

Holly and mistletoe are poisonous, so keep them out of your child's reach. Poinsettias aren't a serious threat, but may cause skin irritation and, if ingested, intense stomachaches.

Keep the phone number for the Kentucky Regional Poison Center of Kosair Children's Hospital close at hand. The number is 1-800-722-5725.

Lights, Fires and Candles

"Fire safety is especially critical during the holidays," said Kravac. "You've got drying trees, lights that give off heat, candles lit to set the mood and fires in the fireplace. All of these increase the chance of a fire in your home."

To prevent fires, keep your tree and other decorations away from heat sources, such as fireplaces, heating vents, burning candles, and space heaters. Keep burning candles, matches and lighters out of children's reach and never leave children unattended in a room where there are candles or a fireplace burning. Teach children to admire the beauty of a fire from a safe distance.

Decorate your tree using only UL-approved lights and cords and inspect lights for frayed cords or faulty bulbs that could catch on fire. Don't overload outlets or extension cords and never place electrical cords under a carpet or rug.

Be aware that if a fire should start on your tree, it will spread more quickly if the tree is dry. If you choose to have a natural tree, buy the freshest tree possible and water it regularly. Take it down as soon as the needles start to fall off.

"No matter how careful you are, you still need to have a working smoke detector in your home," said Kravac. "Remember to check the batteries once a month and change them twice a year."

Develop an escape plan and make sure every member of the household knows what to do if the smoke detector goes off. Establish at least two escape routes in case one is blocked with fire or smoke. Teach your children to STOP, DROP AND ROLL if their clothes catch on fire since running will make the fire burn faster.

Food and Drink

Children also choke on holiday treats such as peppermints, peanuts and popcorn. Keep these foods away from your child. Alcohol poisoning is also serious in children, so keep alcoholic beverages—including egg nog and holiday punch—out of your child's reach. Always clean up half-empty drinks left over from a party.

Toys and Games

"Government regulations help keep toys safe for children, but you still have to be careful," said Kravac. "A toy that's completely safe for an older child can be very dangerous for a younger one. For example, a young child could swallow dice from a board game or a small piece from a model car."

Always look for the age recommendations on the package when you buy toys and keep older children's

toys away from younger ones. If you'd like more information on toy safety, call Kosair Children's Hospital at 502-629-KIDS or 800-852-1770 for a fact sheet or visit www.kosairchildrens.com on the Internet.

"If you give your child a scooter, bicycle, skateboard or in-line skates as a gift, be sure you always give a helmet and insist he or she always wear it when riding or skating," said Kravac. "For skateboards and in-line skates, elbow pads, knee pads and gloves are also recommended. My rule is, 'no helmet, no scooter, bike, skateboard or skates.' It's that simple."

While these safety tips focus mainly on the home, be careful on the road during the holidays, too. People are rushing around shopping

and visiting, and they may be driving carelessly. Always buckle your child into an approved child safety seat in the back seat of your vehicle, and yourself in a seat belt, every time you get into the car be sure to drive carefully.

For more information on holiday safety or to inquire about free fact sheets on a variety of health and safety subjects, call 502-629-KIDS or 1-800-852-1770 or visit our website at www.kosairchildrens.com.

Classified Deadline is Noon Tuesday



Audrey Elizabeth Halcomb, of Somerset, celebrated her third birthday with a party at Mr. Gatti's. Several guests were present and gifts received. Audrey is the daughter of Denny and Beth Halcomb and the granddaughter of Dennis and Bonnie Halcomb, formerly of Mt. Vernon, and Mary Downs and David Godby, of Somerset.



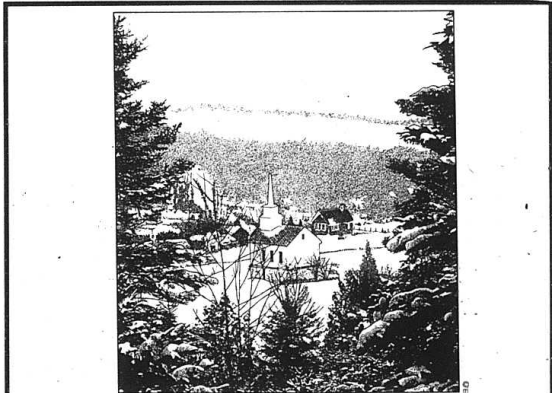
Mark and Linda Cable Loudemilk would like to announce the newest addition to their son, Benjamin Jonmark. He was born April 9, 2000 at Central Baptist Hospital. Jonmark weighed 7 lbs. 8 ozs. and was 20 1/2 inches long. Grandparents are Harold and Patsy Cable and Bobby and Alma Loudemilk.



Matt and Bootsie Shepherd would like to announce the newest addition to the family. Seth Matthew Shepherd was born December 11th at Pattie A. Clay Hospital. He weighed 8 lbs. 13 ozs. Grandparents are Cleda Shepherd of Mt. Vernon and Lucille Renner, also of Mt. Vernon.



Cumberland College recently held its annual student led convocation. Several students participated in the morning's service through inspirational Christmas readings and music. Stephanie Dobbs, above, center, and Lora Beth Payne, below, second from right, both from Mt. Vernon joined the festivities by performing in two vocal groups. Stephanie performed with the mixed vocal group One Voice, while Lora Beth performed with the all female group Reflections. Stephanie is the daughter of Bently and Leila Cromer of Mt. Vernon. Lora Beth is the daughter of Dennis and Faith Payne.



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Pictured, front row: Dr. James Chism and Marcia. Back row, from left: Amanda Chism, Barbara Hall, Brenda Estes, Terry Lunice, and Hannah Chism. Not pictured was Kathy Bryant.

