

2013

# Holiday Health & Safety Tips

**Harford County  
Health Department**



Public Health  
Prevent, Promote, Protect.  
Harford County Health Department

# Toy Safety

**Before purchasing a toy this holiday season, there are a few things to keep in mind**

- **Be sure the toy is age-appropriate.** Check the age recommendation on products, but also keep in mind the mental and physical abilities of the child for whom you are buying.
- **Avoid certain toys.** Steer clear of those which contain loose parts, sharp edges, or paint that could chip with chewing and playing.
- **Consider younger siblings.** Be cautious of buying any toy that would pose a threat to a younger child if they were to get a hold of it.
- **Don't forget a helmet.** If purchasing a riding toy, remember to include a helmet and be aware of keeping these toys away from stairs, traffic, and water.
- **Remember to clean up.** Discard of all plastic and string immediately after presents are opened to eliminate danger to small children.

# Travel Safety

**The holiday season is a great time to visit family and friends, but there are a few safety tips to remember before traveling**

- **Check conditions.** Before leaving, check your area's road and weather conditions, as well as the areas you will be traveling through. If inclement weather is expected, let someone at your destination know when you are leaving and when to expect you.
- **Winterize your car.** Before traveling, be sure that oil level, tire pressure, defroster, antifreeze, and brakes are all checked by a certified mechanic, and that any necessary changes are made.
- **Be prepared.** Begin with a full tank of gas and be prepared for any emergency. Things to have in your vehicle may include: snow scraper, flashlight, jumper cables, flares, first aid kit, and even blankets.
- **Leave early.** Heavy traffic during the holidays is inevitable. Allow yourself plenty of time to get to your destination safely.
- **Plan ahead.** If consuming alcohol, plan for a designated driver. Never drink and drive or allow another person to drink and drive.

# Home Safety

**Whether spending the holidays at home or away, it is important to keep your house safe. Things you can do to prevent any danger in your home are:**

- Have chimney and fireplace inspected and cleaned.
- Check batteries and test all smoke detectors.
- Be prepared for power outages. Stock up on non-perishable food items and batter-operated devices. Remember to keep generators at least 20 feet away from the house
- Have heating system serviced to ensure it is working safely and correctly
- Install a carbon monoxide (CO) detector in your home to alert you of any presence of the deadly gas
- Coat driveways and walkways with cat litter or sand when ice is present

# Mental Health

**Stress can be at an all-time high during the holidays, which can pose a threat to your heart and overall health. In order to keep stress levels down as much as possible:**

- **Don't over commit.** There are seemingly endless parties and dinners to attend and shopping to get done, but keep in mind that *you don't have to do it all!* Utilize friends and family when help is needed and don't be afraid to say "no" to commitments that aren't practical for you.
- **Get adequate rest.** Stress becomes increasingly more difficult to manage when sleep-deprived.
- **Be aware of spending.** Money is a main stressor during the holidays, so create a budget and be sure to stick to it.
- **Exercise.** Not only does working out help you physically, but also helps to reduce stress and maintain a positive outlook during the holidays.
- **Slow down.** Remind yourself what the holidays are about and that everything does not need to be perfect.