

FOR THE HEALTH OF IT...  
(December 23, 2013)

The Orleans, Genesee and Wyoming County Health Departments are encouraging county residents to "Choose Health." Taking small steps in our day-to-day living and making positive health choices will lead to healthier outcomes. Learning something new every day is one of those small steps...

Are you finished with your holiday shopping and/or decorating? If not, here are a few suggestions to help make your holidays bright, safe and healthy:

For Children:

As adults, we play a big role in making sure the times stay happy by choosing toys that are safe for children to play with. When selecting a toy, clothing or jewelry, think about all the factors involved in the gift selection.

- Make sure the toy being chosen is age appropriate. Most toys list the age for which the toy is meant, but sometimes a child's skill level and age do not match.
- Make sure there are no sharp edges or small parts if the toy is going to a young child. Small parts are definitely a choking hazard for youngsters. Throw away damaged or broken toys. It can be helpful for adults to get down on the floor at a child's level to see what might be around that little crawlers and pets can pick up and put in their mouths.
- Balloons are fun for most everyone, but they are a major cause of choking in young children and pets, so keep them out of a small child's reach. Make sure that all plastic wrapping is discarded before a child or pet can play with it possibly causing suffocation.
- If a riding toy is being given to a child, make sure a helmet is part of the gift. If children learn early that a helmet is necessary to protect their head, they will more than likely wear it later when they ride bicycles, 4-wheelers, or motorcycles. Traumatic brain injuries are one of the leading causes of injuries to young children requiring a trip to the hospital ED.
- Children need to learn early about picking up toys they have finished playing with. Toys spread around the floor can be a fall hazard for everyone. Having a place for toys to be stored that kids can access is always a good idea. If shopping for a toy box or other containers to

hold toys make sure they do not have hinges, holes, or sharp edges that can cut little fingers or heavy lids that can slam down on heads or hands.

- Product safety experts warn us about the dangers involved with magnets. Magnets can cause serious injury and death, if eaten or inhaled. Apparently some magnets appear to look like candy! Also, toys with small "button" batteries can be a real hazard. Many imported toys, candies, and children's jewelry may contain lead, so buyer beware!!!
- Adult supervision of playtime is important to overall safety. Enjoy those kids while you can. They are young for such a short time in the whole scheme of things.

#### For Pets:

- Pets are a wonderful addition to a family, but not so good as a gift at holiday time. Pets need special attention and patience to adjust to their new home. If you are planning to get a pet, plan to get it when there is time for a calm, stress-free environment for your new pet to learn about new surroundings and training.
- When buying gifts for pets, remember to make sure there are no batteries, magnets or anything that would harm your pet in the toy. Make sure treats are appropriate for the pet's age and size.
- Watch human treats and keep plants out of reach of your pets. If you have a live tree and put any preservatives in the water, cover it with tin foil so your pet won't be tempted to drink the water.

#### For Adults:

- Product recalls are published periodically and can be checked on the Internet by going to [www.recall.gov](http://www.recall.gov) for the most recent updates on recalls for toys, appliances, etc.
- Give gifts of board games to encourage family time and less media time.
- Give the gift of time to your community. As a family, find ways to volunteer to make your community a better place to live, work and play.
- Be prepared! Give the gift of preparation for home, school, work and travel. Make sure you have everything you need to keep your family

safe and comfortable in the event of an emergency. Visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) for more information.

We hope you will take time out this season to count your blessings, relax and enjoy your family and friends. We wish you and yours a happy Holiday season and a delightful and Merry Christmas!

For information about health department services, call the Wyoming County Health Department at 786-8890, or visit their web site at [www.wyomingco.net/health/main.html](http://www.wyomingco.net/health/main.html).