

Spirit of Christmas

Think safety this holiday season

Toys should be bigger than the toddler's fist

The holiday season is rapidly approaching.

While children are making their lists and checking them twice, parents are preparing for this hectic

but special occasion.

The excitement of the season gives people a sense of familiarity and safety. It also brings hazards that can cause injuries that clearly are preventable, whether they are caused by toys, decorations, or win-

ter activities.

Safe Kids Canada recommends the following holiday safety tips to ensure everyone has a safe and happy holiday.

Buy toys with safety in mind:
 Follow the age recommendations on the toys even if you believe that your child is an exception.

If the toy is too advanced, it could not only be frustrating but be a hazard to the child.

To prevent choking, buy toys that are bigger than your child's fist and inspect the toys to ensure that they don't have parts that could break off and be inhaled or swallowed.

Avoid toys with long strings or cords. They could lead to strangulation for infants or toddlers particularly

in cribs or playpens.

Ensure that the toy box is safe for children.

The toy box should have adequate ventilation in case a child crawls inside and the lid should be lightweight and well supported to prevent it from slamming down on a child's head, or hands.

Monitor toys that require batteries.

Make sure batteries are properly installed to prevent overheating and explosion.

Old batteries can leak and cause corrosive burns. If swallowed, button-type batteries could become stuck and leak, causing chemical internal burning or poisoning. If your child swallows a battery call the Poison Information Centre, 416-813-5900.

Toys need to be maintained.

Inspect toys regularly for damage. Toys that are broken could create sharp edges or pieces small enough to swallow.

Need some gift ideas with safety in mind? How about a bicycle helmet to go with the bike, or a helmet, elbow, knee pads, and wrist guards to go with those in-line skates?

Dangerous plants

English Holly (berries can cause severe gastroenteritis); Mistletoe (all parts are fatal to children and adults); Poinsettia (causes stomachaches); English Ivy (leaves and berries can cause stomach pains, heavy breathing, and possibly lead to coma).

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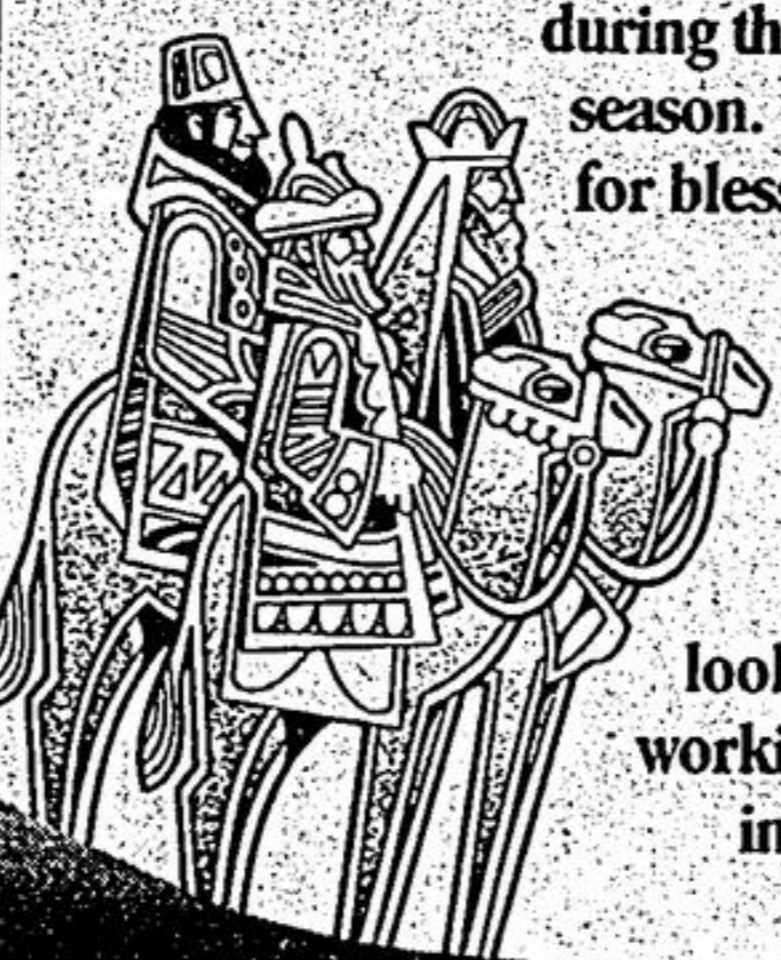
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