

Thousands of children suffer eye injuries from toys

8 December 2010

Too many eye injuries happen to children around the holidays due to unsafe use of toys but the vast majority of these injuries can be prevented. December is Safe Toys and Celebrations Month and the American Academy of Ophthalmology through its EyeSmart campaign reminds parents of the dangers that toys may pose to children's eyes.

"The [holidays](#) should be a time of happiness and family festivities," said Richard Bensinger, MD, clinical correspondent for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. "A serious eye injury can ruin your celebration and, more seriously, leave your child with permanent vision loss."

Children receive all types of potentially unsafe presents during the holidays, including BB guns, darts, pellet guns and paintball guns. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, there were more than 230,000 toy-related injuries treated in U.S. emergency rooms in 2007 (the most recent year from which data is available); nearly three quarters of those injured were children under age 15.

With so many toys being recalled or having the potential to cause injuries, many parents are wondering what toys are safe. "It's important for parents to choose a toy that is appropriate for their child's age, abilities, maturity, and the parent's willingness to supervise use of the toy," says Dr. Bensinger.

"Avoid purchasing toys with sharp, protruding or projectile parts," said Dr. Bensinger "This includes innocent appearing toys such as a popgun or a paddleball set. Children should have appropriate supervision when playing with potentially hazardous [toys](#) or games."

Also consumers need to remember that sports equipment, a popular gift, should also include the protective eyewear. Sports-related [eye injuries](#) can cause permanent vision loss and account for about

40,000 eye injuries annually. "If you plan to give sports equipment, provide appropriate protective eyewear with polycarbonate lenses," said Dr. Bensinger. [Parents](#) can check with their Eye M.D. to learn about protective gear recommended for their child's sport.

More information: For more information about eye safety and eye injuries, go to www.geteyesmart.org

Provided by American Academy of Ophthalmology

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