

## Help Make the Season Healthy and Safe

**The holidays are a time to celebrate, but they're also a time to pay special attention to your health and well-being to avoid season-spoiling illnesses and injuries.**

Each year during the holidays, tens of thousands of Americans make a trip to hospital emergency rooms for treatment of preventable injuries and illnesses. That includes about 12,000 people with injuries related to setting up or displaying holiday decorations, according to the American College of Emergency Physicians.

Here are some tips for staying safe and healthy — and out of the ER — during the holidays.

- Be responsible when drinking alcohol. If you drink, do so in moderation and have a designated driver. Never drink and drive.
- Be careful when using sharp objects to open gifts — especially those impenetrable plastic packages toys come in.
- Take care when hanging or taking down outdoor lights. Serious injuries come from falling off roofs and ladders.
- Use a ladder or step stool indoors — not a



sofa or chair — to hang decorations, ornaments and tree toppers.

- Don't overload electrical outlets. This could start a fire or cause a serious burn or electrical shock.
- Don't overindulge in holiday food. Be especially careful if you have high blood pressure or cholesterol, or heart problems.

The holiday season can be an especially magical time for kids. Festive plants, decorations and gifts help make the season bright, but some of them can be dangerous if children (or pets) put them in their mouths.



Tinsel and Christmas tree ornaments made of thin metal, plastic or glass can potentially cut or block the airway if ingested. Hang smaller ornaments higher up on the tree.

Keep holiday plants like poinsettia, mistletoe and holly out of reach. And clean up any fallen berries and leaves. The berries from these plants can be toxic if swallowed and can cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

Aromatic oils like wintergreen, eucalyptol and other highly concentrated “essential oils” that give the house a Christmas scent can be harmful if swallowed. They may have high alcohol content or the potential to cause severe problems if ingested even in small amounts.

Small toys can be a choking hazard. If a toy can slip through a toilet paper roll, it poses a risk. Keep toys age-appropriate and free of lead paint. To check whether the gifts you are giving or receiving have been recalled, visit <http://www.recalls.gov>

Keep an eye out for tiny batteries and small disc (button) magnets that can be found in toys and other gifts. They can be harmful if swallowed.

Just one or two ounces of alcohol left in the bottom of a glass can be fatal to a toddler. Pick up discarded cups left behind by adults during a party and put away all alcohol before going to bed.

Keep the number for poison control 1-800-222-1222 on or near your telephone. If you suspect a child has swallowed a poisonous substance, don't wait for symptoms. Call poison control or other emergency help immediately and follow their instructions.

It's our nature in the Security business to think of possible hazards. We hope these simple tips will help you enjoy the holiday season safely.

## Season's Eatings

The holiday season is a time to celebrate. From the buffet table to the office party to the family feast, food takes center stage. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers the following basic food safety tips to keep a most unwelcome guest – food poisoning – from spoiling your holiday fare.

**Clean:** Wash hands and food-contact surfaces often. Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get onto cutting boards, knives, sponges and countertops.

**Separate:** Don't cross-contaminate – keep bacteria from spreading from one food product to another. This is especially true for raw meat, poultry and seafood. Keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods.

**Cook:** Cook to proper temperatures. Foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause food-borne illness.

**Chill:** Do not leave perishable foods out for more than two hours. Refrigerate promptly. Refrigerating foods quickly keeps most harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying.

For more holiday health and safety tips from the CDC visit:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/family/holiday>

## Best wishes for a safe and happy holiday season from Securitas Security Services USA!

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