

CORIE



December 2014

SBH Team

Mary Ann Glusich
School Nurse

Jill Mullens
School Nurse

Erin McFarland
School Counselor

Brenda Orth
Clerical Assistant

Jackie Gaughenbaugh
Clerical Assistant



Yes, I believe in the Magic of Christmas

"Our Father, he prayed, be with me tonight. There is much work to do and my schedule is tight. My sack will hold toys to grant all kids wishes. The supply will be endless like the loaves and the fishes. I can do all these things Lord, but only through you. I just need your blessing and it is easy to do."

I don't think it's necessary for parents to decide upon a time to tell their children there is no Santa. "As children develop, the magical thinking that is so common in kids, which allows them to so readily accept all the details of Santa Claus, will give way and they will soon figure it out on their own", says Jared Diertschi professor with family therapy at Kansas State University. Remember, there was a St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra (present day turkey). He was generous and dedicated to children. In 1822, we were given a gift from Clement Moore about a "jolly old elf with a round belly" that opened up an imaginary world of kindness, sharing and giving. God made our imaginations. He gave us the ability to be creative and to connect deeply with stories. Jesus himself appealed to people's imagination by telling stories that communicated profound truths. Parents can use Santa to teach their children to be giving rather than demanding, and to experience generosity and grace. Christmas is a magical time. Never stop believing and keep your hearts filled with hope and faith.

Helping Children Cope with Holiday Stress

Set a calm example. The most important way parents can help ease anxiety in children during the holidays is by trying to keep things relaxed. The way parents handle an issue can set the tone for how their kids will behave.

Set up conditions for good behavior. Avoid taking your child to places such as the mall or holiday gatherings when he is hungry or tired. It's hard even for grown-ups to deal with noise and lots of stimulation; kids get hungry more often and become tired more easily.

Remember the importance of routines. The holidays can throw a big wrench into household routines, and that can play a role in anxiety in children. Try to get routines back on track once an event or party is over.

Food is important. Between all the extra sugary holiday snacks and the lack of time to sit down to regular meals, it can be all too easy for kids to eat less healthy foods, which can contribute to holiday stress.

Get your child moving. Fresh air and exercise are essential for boosting mood and relieve anxiety. Make sure you schedule some time to get your child outside to run around and play.

Avoid over scheduling. Try to limit your holiday parties and activities so that you and your child are not overwhelmed.

Remind your child -- and yourself -- what the holidays are really all about. Help others whether it's by shoveling an elderly neighbor's sidewalk or by wrapping presents for needy kids at your local church. Helping others decreases stress.



Avoid Common Holiday Dangers

Family gatherings, special traditions, delicious treats — the holiday season may be the most wonderful time of the year, especially for kids. Unfortunately, for emergency room doctors it's also one of the busiest.

Learn how to protect your little ones from some common holiday dangers, so you and your family can enjoy a season that's happy and healthy.

Poisoning

- Mistletoe, holly, poinsettias, Jerusalem cherry plants, and other plants are commonly used as decorations during the holidays. These are considered potentially poisonous and should be kept out of the reach of kids.
- "Bubble lights" containing methylene chloride can be poisonous if a child drinks the fluid from more than one light (even if labeled nontoxic). Snow sprays may be harmful if the aerosol propellants are used improperly.
- Alcohol poisoning is a common risk for children during the holiday season. Parents must take care to remove all empty and partially empty cups as soon as possible. Because kids imitate adults, many may drink the beverages they see adults drinking. Even small amounts of alcohol can be dangerous.
- Food poisoning is another potential holiday hazard. Practice food safety by washing hands, utensils, dishes, and anything else that comes in contact with raw meat, including poultry and fish, and raw eggs before and after use. Don't contaminate a serving dish with raw meat. Store leftovers properly and heat them thoroughly before serving.

Choking and Swallowing

- Tree ornaments, light bulbs, icicles, tinsel, and small toys are potential choking hazards for small children because they may block the airway. The general rule of thumb is that if it's small enough to fit in the mouths of babies and toddlers, it's too small to play with.
- Common holiday foods such as peanuts or popcorn are potential choking hazards and should not be given to children under age 4.
- The needles of holiday trees can cause painful cuts in the mouth and throat of a child who swallows them.
- Angel hair (made from finely spun glass) and ornament hangers may cause cuts, skin irritation, or eye damage if touched or swallowed by children.

Fire

- Keep your tree secured in a sturdy stand so that it doesn't tip over and keep it away from all heat sources such as electrical outlets, radiators, and portable space heaters. If you buy an artificial tree, be sure that it is labeled "fire-retardant." Unplug all lights, both indoor and outdoor, and extinguish all candles every night before you go to bed.
- Avoid using real candles on a tree — it only takes a minute for a spark from a candle to burst into flames. Keep live candles away from windowsills and mantles and use only flame-retardant decorations when decking your halls.
- Circuits that are overloaded with lights, decorations, and accessories can start a fire.
- Have your fireplace inspected before you light your first fire of the season. A chimney professional can clean your fireplace and ensure that it is safe to use. You can protect your family by using a sturdy fireplace screen when burning fires. Never burn paper or pine boughs, they can float out of the chimney and ignite a nearby home.
- Practice [fire safety](#), have a family emergency plan in the event of a fire, and check smoke detectors before you put up your holiday decorations.

Accidents

- When cooking, keep pot handles turned away from the front of the stove and always keep the oven door closed. To prevent accidents, watch your kids while you bake or cook.
- Keep breakable ornaments out of young kids' reach — or keep them off the tree until your children are older.
- Make sure the kids are buckled up securely during car rides and do not drive after drinking alcohol.
- Sledding accidents can be very serious. Young kids should be supervised and should avoid dangerous sledding areas, such as rocky areas, steep hills, and crowded sledding hills.

Ref: Kids Health





"Let's keep everyone healthy over the holidays. Plenty of sunscreen for the snowmen, diabetes testing for the sugarplum fairies, a gluten-free diet for the gingerbread man, and lets put up a basketball hoop for the elves!"

Austin's Christmas Wish

Austin, a 6th grader at St. Vincent de Paul School has had food allergies since he was born. His parents, friends and Austin himself work very hard to avoid any exposure that might bring about a life threatening allergic reaction. "My Christmas wish is that no more kids will die from food allergies", says Austin.

This is a wonderful time of year for getting together over meals with those closest to you. Many suffer from peanut, dairy and other dietary allergies that can cause life threatening anaphylactic shock. Members of the inner circle are the most reliable and trusted food allergy gatekeepers for parties and celebrations, but it's not possible to assume that friends and family will always remember to avoid reaction-causing foods after you've told them.

Like many other school nurses, I was very dismayed to read about a 7 year old boy who died from accidentally being given a chocolate candy containing a hazelnut. After biting into the candy, he immediately spit it out. Despite quick treatment with an Epi Pen, he still ended up in pretty bad shape on life support.

The holiday season is an optimal time to check in and remind everyone of you or your child's allergies prior to the get-togethers. This season is also an excellent time to ensure auto-injectors and rescue medications are up-to-date. Here are some holiday gathering tips.

- **Hang on to labels.** Keep food labels for everything used to prepare a festive homemade holiday meal so an allergic guest may double-check the ingredient list.
- **Avoid cross-contamination.** Care with utensils and surfaces when preparing foods is a must. Rinsing a knife that chopped walnuts is insufficient -- thoroughly scrub all utensils and surfaces with soap and water and wipe clean. Even trace amounts of a food can cause a reaction for highly allergic people.
- **Use color coding.** How about trying color-coded cooking utensils this year? A bright red silicone spatula or a nifty lime green serving spoon is sure to alert food-allergic guests. Many large box stores stock seasonal arrays of themed and brightly colored utensils in advance of the holiday season.