

When is a toy not a toy?

With Christmas fast approaching the Child Health Improvement Team would like you to share these important safety messages with parents and carers to ensure a happy and safe Christmas for all children.

Answer: When the toy is meant for an older child

- Age warning symbols show that a toy is not safe for a child under three years, usually because they contain small parts that may choke a baby
- Clear up burst balloons as they are a choking hazard for small children
- Avoid mixing old and new batteries in toys as the old one may overheat
- Most accidents with toys happen when children and adults trip over them, serious accidents happen when toys are left on the stairs



Answer: When it is a Christmas novelty

Toys are governed by regulations to protect young children from choking; however Christmas novelties such as tree decorations are not toys and are therefore not governed by the strict toy regulations.

Children under 36 months are at greatest risk, as the Christmas novelty may have parts a child could easily pull off and be at risk of choking.



Answer: When it contains an unsecured battery

Batteries in children's toys are covered by safety regulations and should be securely enclosed. **Button batteries** are found in everyday items including keys, animated Christmas decorations and musical greeting cards. If a button battery is swallowed, the electrical charge creates caustic soda inside the body which can burn a hole through the throat and major blood vessels with catastrophic results.

How to keep children safe?

- Keep products with button batteries out of reach if the battery compartment isn't secured with a screw
- Keep batteries out of children's reach and sight, ideally in a high-up, lockable cupboard
- Buy toys from reputable retailers
- Teach older children that button batteries are dangerous and not to play with them or give them to younger brothers and sisters.

If you suspect a child has swallowed a button battery, act fast.

- Take them straight to the A&E department or dial 999 for an ambulance
- Tell the doctor that you think the child has swallowed a button battery
- Do not let them eat or drink
- Do not make them sick
- Do not wait to see if any symptoms develop.



Resources:

- [ROSPA](#) Keeping kids safe – Information and advice
- [ROSPA - toy safety advice](#)
- [ROSPA- Christmas novelties](#)
- [Child Accident Prevention Trust](#) Information and advice
- Child Health Improvement Team website - www.sussexcommunity.nhs.uk/wscht - Resource list, key messages.

References:

- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. (2010). *Unintentional injuries: prevention strategies for under 15s. PH 29*. Retrieved from <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph29>
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. (2010). *Unintentional injuries in the home: interventions for under 15s. PH 30*. Retrieved from <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph30>
- National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. (2010). *Unintentional injuries on the road: interventions for under 15s PH 31*. Retrieved from <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ph31>
- Public Health England. (2014). *Reducing unintentional injuries in and around the home among children under five years*. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/322210/Reducing_unintentional_injuries_in_and_around_the_home_among_children_under_five_years.pdf
- Public Health England. (2016). *Road Injury Prevention. Resources to support schools to promote safe active travel*. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/505277/25_Feb16FINAL_DOCUMENT.pdf
- Public Health England. (2017). *Preventing unintentional injuries: A guide to all staff working with children under five years*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/unintentional-injuries-prevention-in-children-under-5-years>