

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

December 10, 2013

Steve Todd, MSA, RS
Health Officer/Administrator
517-279-9561 ext. 148

Theresa Christner, Health Ed./Health Promotion Dir.
517-279-9561, ext. 144

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Deck the Halls with Safety

Coldwater, MI. Decorating for the holidays is one of the most fun and festive parts of the season, but who knew that some of those beautiful decorations could possibly pose a threat to you and your children? Estimates from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission show that 15,000 people in the US were injured and visited an emergency department in November and December of 2012 due to holiday decorating mishaps. The Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency suggests that you consider these prevention tips while “Decking the Halls” of your home for the holidays so you can spend your holiday time being hospitable instead of being hospitalized!

Christmas Trees:

- If you decide to cut a live tree, be sure to water it every day. When a tree starts to dry up, the needles become brittle and dry out – creating a fire hazard.
- Place the tree in a wide base so that it minimizes the chances of it tipping over.
- Children are naturally curious (as are cats and other pets), so strategically place breakable ornaments and ornaments with metal hooks towards the top of the tree where they cannot be reached. Save the bottom of the tree for ornaments that aren't easily breakable.

Lights and Candles:

- Keep all matches and lighters out of reach of children! Avoid buying novelty lighters that look like toys.
- Check all of the lights for fraying wires, loose connections and broken sockets before placing them on the tree and around the house.

- Do not stretch extension cords across the room if there is not an outlet close. Injuries like sprains and broken bones from tripping and falling will put a damper on everyone's holiday!
- Keep all burning candles away from the edge of tables and window sills. Do not forget to blow them out before you leave the house or go to bed. Never leave a child alone in a room with a burning candle. Teach them that fire is hot!

Plants:

- Live plants add a little something special when decorating your home, but some of those plants can be poisonous to you kids and pets, such as: mistletoe berries, holly berries, and Jerusalem cherry (just to name a few).

Food Allergies:

- Shell fish, nuts, and other allergens find their way into dips, spreads, cookies and breads. Keep in mind that your food may be shared with others who are unaware of the ingredients used. Nationally, recent statistics show that emergency room visits associated with food allergens are on the rise. Always -- keep a list of emergency phone numbers next to the phone so that if necessary, you can quickly reach someone that can help.

Seeing a beautiful tree and your home lit up with lights is one of the endearing parts of the holiday season. Please just remember these few tips to keep everyone out of harm's way when decorating your home. To learn more about how to keep your family safe and healthy check us out at www.bhsj.org or visit one of our 3 locations:

Branch County
570 N. Marshall Rd.
Coldwater, MI 49036
(517) 279-9561

Hillsdale County
20 Care Drive
Hillsdale, MI 49242
(517) 437-7395

Three Rivers
1110 Hill St.
Three Rivers, MI 49093
(269) 273-2161

###