



### ~ TIPS FOR ALL PARENTS ~

#### Buy children accessories for safety.

Toys such as bicycles, scooters, skateboards and inline skates are safer when children wear protective gear. If you plan to give any of these toys as gifts, make them safer by also giving a helmet, knee pads, elbow pads and wrist guards.

#### Stay informed of recalls.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission recalls numerous toys and children's products each year. Check [www.recalls.gov](http://www.recalls.gov) for an archive of old recalls and to sign up to receive email alerts of new recalls.



### REPORT A DANGEROUS TOY

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has the authority to recall dangerous toys and products from the market. If you think a toy or product is hazardous, contact the CPSC and submit a report by:

Phone: 1-800-638-2772

Web: <https://www.cpsc.gov/cgibin/incident.aspx>

Email: [info@cpsc.gov](mailto:info@cpsc.gov)

### FIND OUT MORE or GET INVOLVED

Visit [www.ToySafety.net](http://www.ToySafety.net) for more information on toy safety and to sign up for e-mail alerts.

### FOR COPIES OF THIS PAMPHLET

Contact U.S. PIRG at the address below to obtain copies of these toy tips for your daycare, doctor's office, community center or toy store or visit our website at [www.ToySafety.net](http://www.ToySafety.net).

## U.S. PIRG

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Photo credits: iStockPhoto (child with balloons); Ana Abejon/iStockPhoto (baby with rubber duck); and Monika Adamczyk/iStockPhoto (child with blocks).

[www.toysafety.net](http://www.toysafety.net)



## Tips for Toy Safety

Thousands of toys are on the market, each promising to educate or entertain our children. Unfortunately, as the recalls of millions of toys in 2007 have shown, not every toy is safe. Toy buyers can help protect children from injury by being careful, vigilant shoppers. U.S. PIRG's Tips for Toy Safety are designed to help parents, grandparents, care givers and toy buyers avoid the most common hazards in toys.

# U.S. PIRG

## ~ CHOKING HAZARDS ~

**Avoid choking hazards. Do not buy small toys or toys with small parts for children under 3, or any child who still puts things in her mouth.**

Choking is the most common cause of toy-related deaths. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), at least 33 children aspirated or choked to death from 2005-07 on balloons, toys, or toy parts.

### **Read and heed warning labels.**

Toys with small parts intended for children between 3 and 6 are required by law to include an explicit choke hazard warning.

### **Never give young children small balls or balloons.**

Small balls, balloons and pieces of broken balloons are particularly dangerous, as they can completely block a child's airway.



- Make sure balls for children under 6 years old are more than 1.75 inches in diameter.
- Never give latex balloons to children younger than 8 years old. Mylar balloons are a safer alternative.

### **MAGNETIC TOYS With Powerful Magnets**

Unlike weak "refrigerator magnets," new, powerful small magnets used in most magnetic building toys, toy darts, other toys and magnetic jewelry pose special hazards. The magnets can fall out of small toys and look like shiny candy. If a child swallows more than one magnet, the magnets can attract each other in the body (in stomach and intestines) and cause life-threatening complications. Keep magnetic toys away from children under six. If a child swallows even one magnet, seek immediate medical attention.

### **NOISE**

Children's ears are sensitive. To protect children from loud toys: If a toy seems too loud for your ears, it is probably too loud for a child. Take the batteries out of loud toys or cover the speakers with tape.

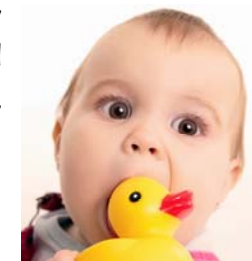
### **STRANGULATION HAZARDS**

- Keep mobiles out of the reach of children in cribs and remove them before the baby is five months old or can push herself up.
- Remove knobs or beads from cords longer than one foot to prevent the cords from tangling into a dangerous loop.

### **LEAD AND TOXIC CHEMICALS**

Some children's toys and cosmetics may contain lead or toxic chemicals, including phthalates. While most lead and phthalates will be phased out of toys beginning in 2009, older toys may still contain them.

- Avoid toys made of PVC plastic which could contain toxic phthalates posing developmental hazards; choose unpainted wooden or cloth toys instead.
- Read the labels of play cosmetics and avoid products with xylene, toluene, or dibutyl phthalate.



### **MORE ON LEAD**

CPSC, PIRG and children's health groups have found high levels of lead paint on toys, as well as high levels of lead in vinyl lunchboxes and bibs and in children's or costume jewelry.

Children exposed to lead can suffer lower IQ, developmental delays or even death. All lead should be removed from a child's environment, especially lead jewelry and other toys that can be swallowed. To test jewelry for lead, use a home lead tester available at the hardware store. Or simply throw cheap, heavy metal jewelry away. Tell your children not to put jewelry in their mouths.