



Toy Safety for Infants and Toddlers

Prepared by the Health Consultant Team at Child Care Aware® of North Dakota

General Guidelines

- Follow manufacturer's age recommendations.
- To prevent choking, it is recommended that toys/objects are larger than 1¼" in diameter and 2¼" in length. Use a choke tube tester or ruler to measure. Round objects are recommended to be 1¾" or larger in diameter since they are more likely to completely block a child's airway. Use a toilet paper tube or ruler to measure. To make it easier, you can use a toilet paper tube to measure all toys/objects. If the item fits inside a toilet paper tube, it is not recommended for children under 3 years of age.
- The weight of the toy should be light enough for the child to handle.
- Toys should be labeled washable and non-toxic.
- Assess if a toy may contain lead. Lead can appear in the paint on the surface or in the toy's vinyl, pigment or plastic. Avoid purchasing non-brand toys from discount stores or private vendors to limit potential exposure.
- Check the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) website, www.cpsc.gov, for toy recalls and alerts.
- Toys should be certified by the Toy Safety Certification Program (TSCP) or American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

Toy Construction

- **Riding toys** should be stable and well-balanced to prevent tipping. Children age 12 months and older should wear a helmet when using riding toys.
- **Cloth/stuffed toys** should be washable and tightly sewn, have no detachable parts that could be a choking hazard, labeled "flame retardant free", have paper tags removed, and made without foam.
- **Battery operated toys** should have battery case that is securely closed (ex. with screws) so children cannot open it. The ingestion of button batteries can cause serious chemical burns, internal bleeding, and choking. Don't forget that items such as remote controls, musical greeting cards, etc. also contain batteries.
- **Metal toys** should be free from rust, loose/chipping paint, and sharp edges.
- **Plastic toys** should be strong or flexible so they won't break and leave sharp/jagged edges. They should not contain BPA (Bisphenol A), phthalates, or PVC (Polyvinyl chloride).
- **Wood toys** should be free from sharp/splintered edges. If wood is finished, look for non-toxic paints, dyes, stains, varnish, sealants, and finishes.

Toys to Avoid

- Mechanical toys
- Electrical toys
- Small cars (ex. Matchbox or Hot Wheels) due to choking hazard of small wheels and parts.
- Magnets. These can cause serious injuries and/or death if two or more are swallowed, or if one is swallowed with a metal object.
- Toys with detachable small parts that could lodge in throats, ears or noses.
- Foam blocks, books, puzzles, etc. are hazardous because a child could potentially bite off a piece and choke.
- Play forks, spoons, or knives that can become lodged in a child's throat. Large spatulas or mixing spoons are safer choices for dramatic play.
- Toys with sharp edges or points
- Toys with parts that could pinch fingers or toes or catch hair.
- Toys with cords/strings that are longer than 12 inches long (ex. pull toys). Shorten the cord/string.
- Bags, purses, hats or guitars with straps/handles pose a strangulation hazard. Remove strap from hats/guitars. Knot to shorten straps on bags/purses so child can't get his/her head through strap/handle.
- Ties, scarves, necklaces, boas, etc. due to strangulation hazard. Clip ties are safer choices for dramatic play.
- Latex balloons
- Costume jewelry due to choking, strangulation, and possible lead/cadmium exposure
- Propelled objects (including projectiles and other flying toys)
- Toys that produce sounds at noise levels that can damage hearing

Sources:

Minimizing lead exposure, AAP News, Volume 29, Number 1, January 2008. Consumer Product Safety Commission Caring For Our Children" National Health and Safety Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Care, 3rd Edition, 2011
www.ewg.org
www.cehn.org

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