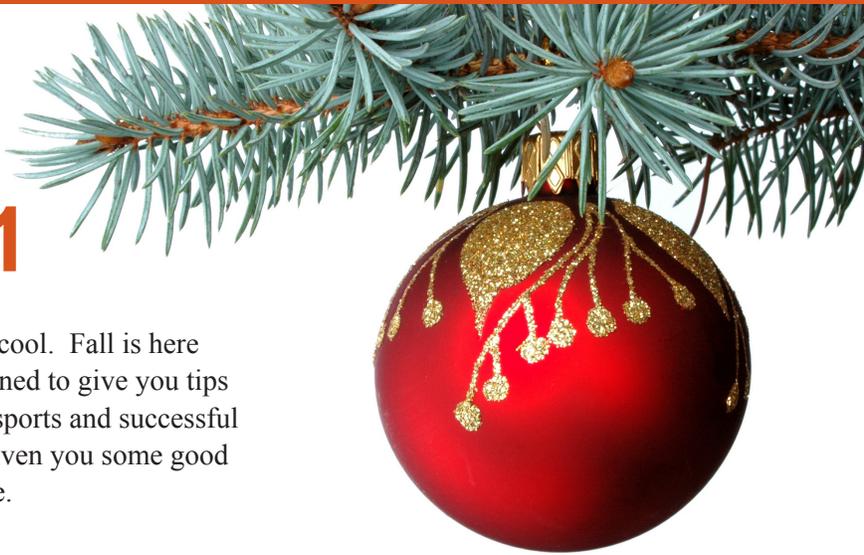




## Fall/Winter 2011

The leaves are turning colors and the air is crisp and cool. Fall is here and winter is not far behind. This newsletter is designed to give you tips to keep your children safe now that they are back to sports and successful in their studies in this new school year. We've also given you some good information to keep all your holiday celebrations safe.



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# Car Safety Seats Information

Car seats were in the news this year due to the change in recommendations for positioning of babies under age 2. One of the important jobs you have as a parent is keeping your child safe when riding in a vehicle. Each year thousands of young children are killed or injured in car crashes. Proper use of car safety seats helps keep children safe.

## Infants and toddlers—rear-facing

The AAP recommends that all infants should ride rear-facing starting with their first ride home from the hospital. All infants and toddlers should ride in a Rear-Facing Car Safety Seat until they are 2 years of age or until they reach the highest weight or height allowed by their car safety seat's manufacturer.

### ■ Common questions

**Q:** What if my baby's feet touch the back of the vehicle seat?

**A:** Your child can bend his legs easily and will be comfortable in a convertible seat. Injuries to the legs are rare for children facing the rear.

**Q:** What do I do if my baby slouches down or to the side in his car safety seat?

**A:** Blanket rolls may be placed on both sides of the infant and a small diaper or blanket between the crotch strap and the infant. Do not place padding under or behind the infant or use any sort of car safety seat insert unless it came with the seat or was made by the manufacturer of the seat.

**Q:** Can I adjust the straps when my baby is wearing thicker clothing, like in the winter?

**A:** Yes, but make sure the harnesses are still snug. Also remember to tighten the straps again after the thicker clothes are no longer needed. Ideally, dress your baby in thinner layers instead of a bulky coat or snowsuit, and tuck a blanket around your baby over the buckled harness straps if needed.

## Toddlers and preschoolers—forward-facing

All children 2 years or older, or those younger than 2 years who have outgrown the rear-facing weight or height limit for their car safety seat, should use a Forward-Facing Car Safety Seat with a harness for as long as possible, up to the highest weight or height allowed by their car safety seat's manufacturer. It is best for children to ride in a seat with a harness as long as possible, at least to 4 years of age. If your child outgrows his seat before reaching 4 years

of age, consider using a seat with a harness approved for higher weights and heights.

## School-aged children—booster seats

Booster seats are for older children who have outgrown their forward-facing car safety seats. All children whose weight or height is above the forward-facing limit for their car safety seat should use a Belt-Positioning Booster Seat until the vehicle seat belt fits properly, typically when they have reached 4 feet 9 inches in height and are between 8 and 12 years of age. The owner's manual that comes with your car safety seat will tell you the height and weight limits for the seat. As a general guideline, a child has outgrown his forward-facing seat when any one of the following is true:

- He reaches the top weight or height allowed for his seat with a harness. (These limits are listed on the seat and also included in the instruction booklet.)
- His shoulders are above the top harness slots.
- His ears have reached the top of the seat.

### ■ Types of booster seats

Booster seats are designed to raise the child up so that the lap and shoulder seat belts fit properly. High-back and backless booster seats are available. They do not come with harness straps but are used with the lap and shoulder seat belts in your vehicle, the same way an adult rides. Booster seats should be used until your child can correctly fit in lap and shoulder seat belts. Booster seats typically include a plastic clip or guide to help ensure the correct use of the vehicle lap and shoulder belts.

### ■ Installation tips for booster seats

Booster seats must be used with a lap and shoulder belt. When using a booster seat, make sure

- The lap belt lies low and snug across your child's upper thighs.
- The shoulder belt crosses the middle of your child's chest and shoulder.
- Consider buying another car with lap and shoulder belts in the back seat.

## Older children—seat belts

Seat belts are made for adults. Your child should stay in a booster seat until adult seat belts fit correctly (usually when the child reaches about 4 feet 9 inches in height and is between 8 and 12 years of age). When children are old enough and large enough to use the vehicle seat belt alone, they should always use lap and shoulder seat belts for optimal protection.



### ■ Using a seat belt

An adult seat belt fits correctly when

- The shoulder belt lies across the middle of the chest and shoulder, not the neck or throat.
- The lap belt is low and snug across the upper thighs, not the belly.
- Your child is tall enough to sit against the vehicle seat back with her knees bent without slouching and can stay in this position comfortably throughout the trip.

## About air bags

### ■ Front air bags

All new cars come with front air bags. When used with seat belts, air bags work very well to protect teenagers and adults. However, air bags can be very dangerous to children, particularly those riding in rear-facing car safety seats, and to preschool and young school-aged children who are not properly restrained. If your vehicle has a front passenger air bag, infants in rear-facing seats must ride in the back seat. Even in a relatively low-speed crash, the air bag can inflate, strike the car safety seat, and cause serious brain injury and death.

## Important reminders

1. Be a good role model. Make sure you always wear your seat belt. This will help your child form a lifelong habit of buckling up.
2. Never leave your child alone in or around cars. Any of the following can happen when a child is left alone in or around a vehicle:
  - He can die of heat stroke because temperatures can reach deadly levels in minutes.
  - He can be strangled by power windows, retracting seat belts, sunroofs, or accessories.
  - He can knock the vehicle into gear, setting it in motion.
  - He can be backed over when the vehicle backs up.
  - He can become trapped in the trunk of the vehicle.

*Source: Car Safety Seats: A Guide for Families 2011 (Copyright © 2011 American Academy of Pediatrics)*

# Holiday Safety Tips

Before we know it the holiday season will be here again. The holidays are an exciting time of year for kids, and to help ensure they have a safe holiday season, here are some tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

## Trees

- When purchasing an artificial tree, look for the label “Fire Resistant.”
- When purchasing a live tree, check for freshness. A fresh tree is green, needles are hard to pull from branches and when bent between your fingers, needles do not break. The trunk butt of a fresh tree is sticky with resin, and when tapped on the ground, the tree should not lose many needles.
- When setting up a tree at home, place it away from fireplaces, radiators or portable heaters. Place the tree out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.
- Cut a few inches off the trunk of your tree to expose the fresh wood. This allows for better water absorption and will help keep your tree from drying out and becoming a fire hazard.
- Be sure to keep the stand filled with water, because heated rooms can dry live trees out rapidly.

## Lights

- Check all tree lights—even if you’ve just purchased them—before hanging them on your tree. Make sure all the bulbs work and that there are no frayed wires, broken sockets or loose connections.
- Before using lights outdoors, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use. To hold lights in place, string them through hooks or insulated staples, not nails or tacks.
- Plug all outdoor electric decorations into circuits with ground fault circuit interrupters to avoid potential shocks.
- Turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights could short out and start a fire.

## Decorations

- Use only non-combustible or flame-resistant materials to trim a tree. Choose tinsel or artificial icicles of plastic or nonleaded metals.
- In homes with small children, take special care to avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable. Avoid trimmings that resemble candy or food that may tempt a young child to eat them.

## Toy Safety

- Select toys to suit the age, abilities, skills and interest level of the intended child. Toys too advanced may pose safety hazards for younger children.
- To prevent both burns and electrical shocks, don’t give young children (under

age ten) a toy that must be plugged into an electrical outlet. Instead, buy toys that are battery-operated.

- Children under age three can choke on small parts contained in toys or games. Government regulations specify that toys for children under age three cannot have parts less than 1 1/4 inches in diameter and 2 1/4 inches long.
- Children can have serious stomach and intestinal problems – including death -- after swallowing button batteries and magnets. Keep them away from young children and call your health care provider immediately if your child swallows one.
- Children under age 8 can choke or suffocate on uninflated or broken balloons. Remove strings and ribbons from toys before giving them to young children.
- Watch for pull toys with strings that are more than 12 inches in length. They could be a strangulation hazard for babies.

## Fireplaces

- Use care with “fire salts,” which produce colored flames when thrown on wood fires. They contain heavy metals that can cause intense gastrointestinal irritation and vomiting if eaten. Keep them away from children.
- Do not burn gift wrap paper in the fireplace. A flash fire may result as wrappings ignite suddenly and burn intensely.

Source: [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org)

## FIVE THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT US

We welcomed Dr Amy Lief to our practice in July of this year. You can read her full bio on our website but here are five things you may not have known about her:

1. She played on the first Yale Women’s Ultimate Frisbee Team and her team made it to College Nationals.
2. She was never able to get a singing part in the camp play.
3. Her favorite ice cream is mint chocolate chip.
4. Her husband can juggle and make balloon animals.
5. She skipped kindergarten



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## Developing Good Homework Habits

Return to school inevitably means the return of homework. It is important to help your child develop good homework habits. That means designating a regular location and time to work on daily assignments. No matter what place you choose, it needs to be well lit and quiet, without the distractions of the television set, other children playing, or people talking on the telephone. Keep your child's materials nearby so she can get started quickly and on her own each afternoon or evening.

Some children get right down to work without much encouragement. Others need help making the transition from playing to a homework frame of mind. Sometimes providing a ten-minute warning is all it takes to help a child get ready mentally as well as to move to the place she intends to work.

There is no universally right time to do homework. In some families, children do best if they tackle their homework shortly after returning home from school in the mid afternoon; other youngsters may do

best if they devote the after-school hours to unwinding and playing, leaving their homework until the evening, when they may feel a renewed sense of vigor. Let your child have some say in the decision making. Homework can often become a source of conflict between parent and child—but if you agree on a regular time and place, you can eliminate two of the most frequent causes of homework-related dissension.

Some parents have found that their children respond poorly to a dictated study time (such as four o'clock every afternoon). Instead, youngsters are given guidelines ("No video games until your homework is done"). Find out what works best for both your child and the family as a whole. Once this is determined, stick with it.

Some youngsters prefer that a parent sit with them as they do their homework. However, do not actually do the homework for your child. She may need some assistance getting focused, getting started and organizing her approach to the assignment. Occasionally, you may need to explain a math problem; in those cases, let your child try a couple of problems first before offering to help.



However if she routinely requires your active participation to get her everyday homework done, then talk to her teacher. Your child may need stronger direction in the classroom so that she is able to complete the assignments on her own. One area where children may need parental help is in organizing how much work will have to be done daily to finish a long assignment, such as a term paper or a science project.

As the weeks pass, keep in touch with your child's teacher regarding homework assignments. If your youngster is having ongoing problems—difficulty understanding what the assignments are and how to complete them—or if she breezes through them as though they were no challenge at all, let the teacher know. The teacher may adjust the assignments so they are more in sync with your youngster's capabilities.