

MEDIA RELEASE

Be a Responsible Santa Shopping Tips for Safe Toys



December is the busiest gift-buying month of the year, and kid's toys are usually #1 in the shopping list. To be a responsible Santa, how do you know that the toys you plan to buy are safe?

Every year children are seen at emergency departments with injuries caused by toys they've just received as Christmas presents. "Parents and gift givers should be Responsible Santas, making sure the toys they give are age appropriate and pose no threat of injury to a child," said Ann Weaver, Director of Safekids New Zealand.

Safekids New Zealand, Plunket, and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs suggest the Christmas shopper "A & 4S" test when choosing toy gifts for the children.

- **Age-Appropriate.** Check the labels and see if the toy is appropriate for the age of the child receiving it.
- **Size.** If the toy or parts of it is smaller than a ping pong ball, it is a choking hazard and not suitable for a child under three years of age.
- **Surface.** Toys should not have sharp points or rough edges that a child could be scratched by, or on which they could cut or pierce themselves.
- **Strings.** Check that strings or tails on toys are not too long and are firmly attached to avoid strangulation injuries.
- **Safety.** Always include the necessary safety gear, especially for ride-on toys (bicycles, skateboards and scooters). A great and economical gift planning idea is to have the grandparents or other family members buy the helmet for the ride-on toy you are purchasing.

Plunket also encourages adults to play with the kids and their new toys. "It's all about having fun and making sure the toys they play with are appropriate for their age group," Sue Campbell, Plunket National Child Safety Advisor.

And for second hand toys, check that parts are complete and fillers won't come off and pose a choking hazard. You can also check the Consumer Affairs' toy safety and product recall pages at www.consumeraffairs.govt.nz.

For more information of child injury prevention and safety messages, visit www.safekids.org.nz.

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Safekids New Zealand is the injury prevention service of Starship Children's Health and a member of SAFE KIDS Worldwide. Our mission is to reduce the incidence and severity of unintentional injuries to New Zealand's children aged 0 - 14 years.

For more information, contact Anthony Rola at anthonyr@adhb.govt.nz, or visit www.safekids.org.nz or call 09 631 0717.

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