

# Looking After You and Your Baby

For mothers of babies ages 0 to 18 months

FAMILY HEALTH PROGRAM™ Brought to you by LYSOL® Products

The CDC, NAPNAP, VNAA and LYSOL® partnership team is committed to education for the health and well-being of you and your baby. We are also committed to keeping you, your baby, and your family healthy by providing safe and convenient cleaning and disinfecting solutions for your home. For more on what we are doing to help ensure a healthy home for you and your family, visit: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), [www.napnap.org](http://www.napnap.org), [www.vnaa.org](http://www.vnaa.org), and [www.lysol.com](http://www.lysol.com).



## TOY SAFETY

Toys are an important part of any child's **development** . . . but **safety** is a critical aspect of any toy or game. In fact, in 2002, more than 212,000 children in the United States were treated in hospital emergency departments for toy-related injuries — including 13 fatalities.

### Toy Safety: What You Should Know

- Falls and **choking** cause most toy-related deaths and injuries in children. In fact, choking alone causes one-third of all toy-related deaths — most often from balloons.
- Children **4 years old and younger** account for almost half of all toy-related injuries and almost all deaths.
- Children **younger than age 3** are at the greatest risk of choking because they tend to put objects — especially toys — in their mouths.

According to the annual Public Interest Research Group survey of toy safety, toys that are considered particularly unsafe are:

- **Toys that contain magnets**, such as in magnetic building blocks or jewelry. These can cause choking and death hazards if swallowed.
- **Loud toys**. These can lead to hearing loss; some toys measure as high as 100 decibels at close range.
- **Toys that contain toxic chemicals**. These can be linked to serious health problems, and can include:
  - Lead in jewelry
  - Play cosmetics containing chemicals such as toluene and xylene
  - Soft plastic toys containing phthalates

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) closely monitors and regulates toys. Any toys that have been made in — or imported into — the United States after 1995 must comply with the CPSC's Child Safety Protection Act. This includes standards for toys such as the paint used on toy surfaces, noise levels, sharp edges, small parts, and flammability.

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of any toy or game.*

### *In the Playroom: Cleaning and Disinfecting*

Germs can spread easily on play surfaces *and* on toys. Here are tips for keeping play areas and toys safer by keeping them clean and disinfected as needed.

#### **Cleaning and Disinfecting Toys**

Follow these simple steps from the CDC:

- Clean off visible dirt with soap and water.
- Spray the toys with disinfectant. Allow the disinfectant to remain in contact with the toy according to label directions, and then wipe off.
- Toys that are likely to be mouthed by infants and toddlers should be rinsed with clean tap water after they are disinfected.

#### **Disinfecting Commonly-Used Surfaces**

From the table top to the doorknob to the ball your child rolls across the floor — the surfaces he/she touches are often breeding grounds for colds and flu germs. According to Dr. Sears, one of the most important ways to protect your family and stop the spread of viruses is to disinfect commonly-touched surfaces with a disinfectant spray or wipe.

Disinfectants are specifically registered with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and contain ingredients that actually *destroy* bacteria and other germs. Check the product label to make sure it says "Disinfectant" and has an EPA registration number.

In proud partnership



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's  
"Learn the Signs. Act Early." Campaign



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## Buying Toys . . . Safely

- **Read labels** to make sure the toy is appropriate for your child's **age** . . .
  - You may think that because your child seems mature for his or her age, he or she can handle a toy that was meant for an older child. However, you're not doing your child a favor by buying a toy for an advanced age group. Remember: the age-appropriate level for a toy is determined by safety factors.
- And read the label for **safety features**, too.
  - Toys made of fabric should be labeled as flame resistant or flame retardant.
  - Stuffed toys should be washable.
  - All toys should be painted with lead-free paint, and art materials (including crayons) should say "nontoxic" somewhere on their packaging.
- Avoid buying toys intended for older children that may have small parts and pose a **choking hazard**.
  - Make sure squeeze toys, rattles, and teethingers are large enough — including when squeezed down into a smaller, compressed shape — to avoid becoming lodged in your baby's mouth or throat.
- Look for toys that are **sturdy and well constructed**.
  - Young children like to pull and twist toys, and often try to put them in their mouths.
  - Make sure that toy eyes, noses, buttons, and other parts that could break off are securely attached.
  - Check toy cars to make sure wheels are on tight.

### *Did you know . . .*

There are "small parts testers," also known as "choke tubes," that you can use to determine if any toy or object presents a choking hazard for a child younger than 3 years of age.

- A choke tube is designed to be about the same diameter as a child's airway (windpipe).
- If an object fits inside of the tester, then it is too small to be within reach of a young child.

Choke tubes can be found in children's specialty stores.

- Avoid toys with **cords or long strings**. These can present a strangulation hazard to very young children, as cords or strings can get wrapped around the neck. Never hang a toy around a toddler's neck. Also, never hang toys with long strings or ribbons in a playpen where children could get entangled in them.
- Choose toys that clearly include **age recommendations** on the labels.
- Federal law bans using small parts in new toys for children younger than 3. But be aware that older toys (like **hand-me-downs** or toys purchased used) may include sharp edges, or may break into jagged pieces or parts small enough to be swallowed by a child.
- **Regularly inspect** your baby's toys to make sure they are not broken or do not have broken seams where small removable parts (such as squeakers in squeeze toys) could be exposed.

### ➤ *For More Information . . .*

**Toy Safety:** [www.safekids.org](http://www.safekids.org) or [www.kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid\\_safe/home/products\\_toys.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/firstaid_safe/home/products_toys.html) or [www.uspirg.org/issues/toy-safety](http://www.uspirg.org/issues/toy-safety)

**Toy Recalls and Other Safety Tips:** [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov)

**How to Choose the Right Developmental Toys for Your Growing Baby:** [www.fisher-price.com/us/playstages/default.asp](http://www.fisher-price.com/us/playstages/default.asp)

