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### **Decoration and Toy Safety for the Holidays.**

St. Luke's and Safe Kids offers holiday safety reminders

**Boise, ID (November 30, 2007)** – It is the time of year again for holiday decorating and gift giving, and St. Luke's and Safe Kids wants to remind parents and caregivers to take a few precautions when decorating and purchasing gifts for Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and other winter festivities.

“Never, never leave lit candles unattended,” says Alissa Lean, Safe Kids Treasure Valley coordinator at St. Luke's. “Don't put candles on a tree or a natural wreath, or near curtains or drapes. Keep matches and lighters locked out of reach.”

In 2002, candles started 18,000 home fires in the United States, and twice as many home fires in December as in any other month, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

“Decorative lighting should be labeled with the UL seal of approval from Underwriters Labs,” says Alissa Lean. “If it's not labeled for outdoor use, don't use it outdoors”

If you are going to decorate a tree this season, St. Luke's and Safe Kids recommend the following precautions be taken:

- Never leave a lit tree or other decorative lighting displays unattended. Make sure to inspect the lights for exposed or frayed wires, loose connections and broken sockets. Do not overload extension cords or outlets and do not run an electrical cord under a rug.
- Natural Christmas trees always have a risk of fire, to minimize this risk always keep the tree watered, and never put a tree next to a heat source such as a fireplace or radiator.
- Keep toxic decorative products and alcohol out of a child's reach, and never leave them unattended when these products are around.

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Decorations and lighting are not the only hazard for children around the holidays; every year hospitals in the United States treat 217,000 toy related injuries. St. Luke's and Safe Kids recommend the following precautions when purchasing toys for the holidays:

- Make sure toys are age-appropriate. Most toy related deaths can be attributed to choking on small parts.
- Avoid second hand toys. If you are not sure the dealer has been vigilant enough to remove toys from their inventory that have been recalled, avoid purchasing from them. If donating a toy, make sure it is new, and has not been recalled.
- Inspect toys to make sure they are in good repair. Do not let young children play with toys that have straps, cords, or strings longer than seven inches, due to the risk of strangulation.
- Actively supervise children. Caregivers should always supervise young children playing with any toy that has small or moving parts, is electrical or battery-powered, has cords, wheels or any other component that pose a potential risk.
- Remain vigilant and up-to-date on toy recalls. Most of the three billion toys sold in the United States are safe, but staying educated on toy recalls can prevent a child injury if they are playing with a recalled toy. Visit [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov) to sign up to receive instant email alerts when a toy has been recalled.

Following these simple steps can help to ensure that the holidays will be safe and fun for all. For more information about toy decoration safety, visit [www.usa.safekids.org](http://www.usa.safekids.org).

Safe Kids Treasure Valley works to prevent accidental childhood injury, the leading killer of children 14 and under. Safe Kids Treasure Valley is a member of Safe Kids Worldwide, a global network of organizations dedicated to preventing accidental injury. Safe Kids Treasure Valley is led by St. Luke's.

St. Luke's is Idaho's only locally governed, not-for-profit health system. The system offers a full continuum of care through its four hospitals and more than 30 outpatient centers and clinics. St. Luke's 7,170 employees, 970-member medical staff, and more than 850 volunteers are committed to delivering the highest quality care to those in medical need regardless of their ability to pay. With a mission "To improve the health of people in our region," St. Luke's provided \$138 million (including capital) in community benefit during its 2006 fiscal year. The hospitals of St. Luke's have earned numerous national awards and recognition for excellence in patient care. For more information about St. Luke's, visit [www.stlukesonline.org](http://www.stlukesonline.org).

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