

Christmas Fun Can be Dangerous

As yet another winter gets into full swing and Christmas is upon us, the Rocky Mountain Poison Center and NWFEMS would like to remind you of a few hazards of the season.

Christmas itself poses a unique set of concerns. There are a number of misconceptions about the potential harm of certain holiday items:

The poinsettia is essentially harmless (despite common belief). Small amounts of leaves or berries are not likely to produce anything more than an upset stomach or mild dermatitis (rash). Mistletoe and holly, however, can cause severe stomach upset if eaten.

With most decorations (angle hair, ornaments, glitter, tinsel, snow globes, etc) the primary concern is cuts or choking and not poisoning. One note of caution is "snow globes". Be sure, if possible, to purchase ones made in the United States, as the potential for contaminated water is less. Remember too, that items under the tree can also cause trouble. Candles, crayons, model glue and perfume can cause problems if consumed in sufficient quantities.

Please keep family pets in mind. Dogs love chocolate and will seek it out; however, its ingredients can be deadly to the dog. Store your unused candy securely out of their reach.

Alcoholic beverages left out after a holiday gathering may also cause problems. As we know all too well, children often get up before we do. Take a few minutes to put things away. You'll sleep better.

Another poisoning to be alert for, unfortunately, is the intentional one. Some people see their problems as more compounded during the holidays and may feel depressed, even suicidal. The fact that many are alone makes things all the more difficult.

Stay alert to any dramatic behavior changes in those around you. If you are worried about a friend or relative, ask them if they are OK. If you suspect an overdose, call 911, getting them medical attention as soon as possible.

As always, be aware of your surroundings, your kids, grandkids, and your world. So many accidents can be avoided with a little extra attention.

And please, in any poison emergency, call the Rocky Mountain Poison Control Center 1-800-332-3073 and/or 911.

From our family to yours, have a safe and happy Christmas holiday season.