



Hazardous Holiday Decorations Warning from California Poison Control

San Francisco – December 14, 2015 – [California Poison Control System](#) (CPCS) warns consumers that certain holiday decorations can be hazardous to children, adults and pets. If you have questions about the following decorations, call poison control at 800-222-1222 (**number works in all states**).

Angel Hair: Angel hair is finely spun glass which can be irritating to the skin, eyes and the throat if swallowed. While decorating, wear gloves to avoid eye and skin irritation.

Bubble Lights: Bubble lights contain a small amount of methylene chloride which is also found in paint removers. Nibbling on an intact light or one "opened" light may cause mild skin or mouth irritation.

Candles: Candles consist of wax and synthetic materials, which are non-toxic. Small amounts of non-poisonous colors and scents are added. However, small chunks pose a choking hazard to small children. Never use lighted candles on a tree or near other plants or trees. Always use non-flammable holders, and place candles where they will not fall.

Christmas tree ornaments: Ornaments can be made of glass, thin metal, Styrofoam or wood. If a child swallows a piece of an ornament, it could cause choking and/or blockage in the intestines. Antique or foreign-made ornaments may be decorated with lead based paint; however, lead toxicity is unlikely from a small, one-time occurrence.

Christmas tree preservatives: Commercial Christmas tree preservatives usually contain a concentrated sugar solution and are considered non-toxic. Homemade solutions containing aspirin or bleach can be potentially harmful if a large amount is swallowed.

Fireplace Color Crystals: These color crystals are attractive to children and can look like candy. They contain powders of heavy metal salts such as copper, selenium, arsenic and antimony. If swallowed, they can be very irritating to the mouth and stomach. They can also cause burns in the mouth and throat. If large amounts are swallowed, it may result in heavy metal poisoning.

Gift Wrap: Most wrapping paper and ribbons are non-toxic, but foil and colored gift wrap may contain lead. Do not let babies chew on these papers.

Glitter or sparkle: Non-toxic.

Icicles or tinsel: These may cause choking or obstruction, especially in cats or small dogs. Since they may contain lead and tin, they may be toxic with repeated ingestion.

Snow scene globes: Snow scenes are plastic globes filled with water or glycerin. When shaken, snow appears to fall upon a Christmas scene. The "snow" is calcium carbonate, which is non-toxic. Sometimes the water may be contaminated with bacteria and food poisoning may result. The symptoms of food poisoning include vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramps.

Snow Sprays: Many snow sprays contain acetone or methylene chloride. This solvent can be harmful when inhaled. Briefly inhaling the spray in a small, poorly ventilated room may result in nausea, lightheadedness and headache. Longer or more concentrated exposures can be more serious. Carefully follow container directions. Be sure to have the room well ventilated when you spray. Once dry, the snow particles are non-toxic.

About CPCS

You can learn more about a variety of poison issues by following CPCS on Facebook at California Poison Control System and on Twitter @poisoninfo. Sign up for weekly safety text messages to your cell phone by texting TIPS to 69866 and Puntos for Spanish tips. Download a free app, Choose Your Poison, for Android and iPhones. CPCS is dedicated to providing residents with the most up-to-date information and 24-hour help in case of poisoning. In case of an accidental poisoning, consumers should immediately call **1-800-222-1222** for advice.

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