

For Further Information, Contact:
David Bobka, WOA Director of Communications
Email: davidwoaoffice@tds.net
Phone: 608.824.2200

CHECK YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING LIST TWICE FOR SAFETY

The Wisconsin Optometric Association urges parents to make smart choices and avoid eye injuries to children

MADISON, WI - The holiday season is a wonderful time of year to enjoy with friends and family, and is certainly a popular time for parents across the county to purchase toys for their children. While toys and games are a great way to challenge a child's eyesight and sharpen visual acuity, certain toys can pose serious dangers to children's vision and eye health.

As the holiday season approaches, the [Wisconsin Optometric Association \(WOA\)](#) joins organizations across the country in recognizing December as *Safe Toys and Gifts Month*. At this time, Wisconsin doctors of optometry would like to remind parents that some toys can cause serious eye injuries and urge them to be vigilant in regards to safety when purchasing their child's toys.

"It comes down to common sense," advises Dr. Lisa Slaby, WOA President and Green Bay area optometrist. "Be proactive and watch for dangerous toys that could injure your children."

The [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) (CPSC) encourages consumers to "read the labels" placed on toys by manufacturers in order to meet strict safety standards. Specifically, parents should look for labels that provide age recommendations and use such information as a guide to purchasing safe toys for children. Last year, an estimated 140,700 children were treated in U.S. hospital emergency rooms and 13 children died as the result of toy-related incidents.

Several shopping tips offered by the CPSC include the following:

- **For children under 3 years of age** – Small parts, un-inflated/broken balloons, as well as marbles, balls, and games with balls that have a diameter of 1.75 inches or less, can pose a choking hazard. Avoid toys that have sharp edges or points.
- **For Ages 3-5** – Avoid toys constructed with thin, brittle plastic that can break into small pieces or leave jagged edges. Household art materials marked with the designation "ASTM-D-4236," such as crayons and paint sets, indicate that the product has been reviewed by a toxicologist and labeled with cautionary information if necessary.
- **For Ages 6-12** - If buying a toy gun, be sure the barrel, or the entire gun, is brightly colored so that it's not mistaken for a real gun.
- **BB guns can be a very dangerous product, if they are not handled correctly.** They should not be used by children under 16 years of age.
- **For all children**, adults should check toys periodically for breakage and potential hazards. Damaged or dangerous toys should be repaired or thrown away.

To report a dangerous product or product-related injury, go to www.saferproducts.gov, and call CPSC's Hotline at (800) 638-2772 or teletypewriter at (800) 638-8270 for the hearing impaired. There are many safe toys on the market today that will not only enhance your child's creativity and personality, but will also allow them to have fun AND stay safe.

About the Wisconsin Optometric Association

The Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA) is a nonprofit affiliation of licensed doctors of optometry and associated businesses dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the vision welfare of the people of Wisconsin. The WOA accomplishes its goals through: education and dissemination of information, organized governmental activity, legislation and regulation, mediation with consumer and public interest groups, and provision of collective benefits to its members. Approximately 640 doctors of optometry are currently members of the WOA, located in nearly every county in the state. All members must be licensed to practice optometry by the State of Wisconsin. For more information, visit WOA's website at www.woa-eyes.org.