



Putnam County Department of Health
1 Geneva Road, Brewster, New York 10509
845-808-1390

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Michelle Martine, Child Advocacy Center, 845-808-1400 x 44122
Barbara Ilardi, Health Department, Public Information Officer, 845-808-1390

HOLIDAY SHOPPING IS UNDERWAY

Safety Tips to Keep in Mind When Selecting Children's Toys

BREWSTER, NY—Many kids are compiling their holiday wish lists and parents have started shopping. Toy safety is important when selecting gifts and Putnam County's Child Advocacy Center (CAC) and the Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) offer some guidance.

“When selecting toys, parents and caregivers need to be mindful of what is age appropriate for the child and recognize that certain items may not be safe,” says Marla Behler, CAC coordinator. According to a report by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), “In 2012 there were an estimated 192,000 toy-related, emergency department-treated injuries to children younger than 15 years.”

Allen Beals, MD, Commissioner of Health, points out that lead remains a problem despite legislation that bans its use in some products and restricts it in others. “While lead has been banned in house paint and items marketed to children, there are still significant numbers of imported items, particularly toys and children's jewelry that are not held to these standards,” Dr. Beals explains. County Executive MaryEllen Odell wants families to heed these warnings for a safe holiday season.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recently presented an updated and

comprehensive look at the lead risk in children's gifts on their website. For more information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/LeadInToys/index.html>

Other problematic toys include ones with small parts that can result in choking or those with projectiles that cause eye injury. Overly loud toys may damage hearing, and there are growing lists of items with small, high-powered magnets (neodymium) that can cause severe gastrointestinal injuries, even death if swallowed. The age appropriateness of a toy should always be considered. (See attached sheet on Toy Safety Tips.)

For busy consumers out shopping for the latest toys, the PIRG has developed a free mobile app for smart phones. It provides instant access to a list of recalled toys, tips and hazards, as well as a way to report unsafe toys. Just point your browser on your phone, or computer, to: <http://www.toysafety.mobi/>.

The CAC's goal is to keep children safe, which includes reducing serious injuries and deaths. For more information please visit <http://www.putnamcountyny.com> and under "Departments" select Child Advocacy Center, or visit our social media site on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/putnamcac>.

The Health Department's mission is to protect and improve the health of the county's nearly 100,000 residents. For more information, please visit www.putnamcountyny.com or social media sites on Facebook at www.facebook.com/putnamhealth and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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For further information:

U.S. Public Interest Research Group @ <http://www.uspirgedfund.org/reports/usf/trouble-toyland-2013>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention @ <http://www.cdc.gov/Features/LeadInToys/index.html>