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*"Working Together for a Healthier Community"*

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**Clinton County Health Department  
Press Release  
"Holiday Safety"  
December 11, 2006**

The holidays are fast approaching, a festive, exciting and fun time of year. It's a time to celebrate, but it is also a time to make safety an important part of your holiday planning. "Each year, thousands of people are rushed to emergency rooms during the holiday season. Injuries from falls, cuts, shocks and burns related to holiday lights and decorations cause emergency rooms to be busy this time of year," said Erin Raville Public Health Educator of the Clinton County Health Department. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention almost 18,000 people were treated in emergency departments for fall-related injuries sustained while decorating during the 2000-2002 holiday season in this country.

To ensure the safety of you and your family this holiday season please follow these safety tips:

- Purchase green, moist trees, never old or brittle. Water live trees daily. If you buy an artificial tree, look for a label stating it is fire resistant. This will ensure that the tree has been manufactured and tested to meet specific safety standards against fire.
- Indoors or outside, use only lights that have been tested for safety by a recognized testing laboratory, which indicates that the lights conform to safety standards. Before using outdoor lights, check labels to be sure they have been certified for outdoor use.
- For additional electrical protection, plug outdoor electric lights and decorations into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters. These are available where electrical supplies are sold. Check each set of lights, new or old, for broken or cracked sockets, broken bulbs, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Always turn off all lights when you go to bed or leave the house.
- Inspect extension cords for damaged insulation, splices or loose plugs before using. Match plugs with outlets. Don't force a 3-pronged plug into a 2-pronged outlet or extension cord. Overloaded or improperly used outlets pose a potential fire and/or shock hazard. Use surge protectors if multiple outlets are needed.
- Candle lighting ceremonies are beautiful traditions but only when proper precautions are taken. Keep matches, lighters and candles away from children, and never leave burning candles unattended.
- In homes with small children and pets, avoid decorations that are sharp or breakable, and keep older ornaments that might be painted with lead paint out of reach of small

children. Trimmings with small removable parts that could be swallowed or inhaled should also be out of children's reach. Avoid decorations that resemble candy or food that a child could ingest.

- After opening gifts, remove all wrapping from tree and fireplace areas immediately. Do not burn papers in the fireplace. A flash fire may result if the wrapping ignites suddenly and burns intensely.

Plan to be safe this holiday season. It's the best gift you can give. For more information on holiday safety, call the Clinton County Health Department at 565-4840 or visit us on the web at [www.clintonhealth.org](http://www.clintonhealth.org).

Endorsed by: \_\_\_\_\_  
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