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Safe Toys and Celebrations Month: How to Prevent Holiday Tragedies

[Lathrup Village] - In the 1983 movie "A Christmas Story", Ralphie sets out to convince the world that a Red Ryder BB gun is the perfect gift.

"You'll shoot your eye out!" was the response he got from his parents, teacher and even Santa Claus. It's one of the more memorable quotes from this Christmas classic because we've all heard it repeatedly during our childhood. And unfortunately, it comes true for too many people.

It's hard to resist giving into your child's overwhelming desire for his or her most wished for gift, especially during the holiday season, but sometimes you have to stand firm for their safety.

Toys - including some seemingly innocent ones - and sporting equipment are responsible for thousands of eye injuries to children every year. That's why Michigan Eye-Bank and Lions of Michigan are promoting Safe Toys and Celebrations Month and urging Americans to purchase safe toys and gifts this holiday season and all year long.

Every year, ophthalmologists see the devastating injuries that seemingly safe toys can cause. By getting the word out, the Eye-Bank and the Lions hope to save you and your child from needless suffering.

When shopping for toys, check labels to make sure they are appropriate for your child's age and maturity level. Watch out for games or toys with sharp or protruding parts or projectiles, and consider carefully before giving darts, pellet guns or other firearms. These items are not appropriate for most children.

If you're giving sporting equipment, consider including appropriate protective eyewear. Approximately 40,000 sports-related eye injuries occur every year, but 90 percent of these injuries could be avoided with the right protective eyewear.

Lastly, before you open a bottle of your favorite bubbly to toast the holidays, learn how to do it safely. Make sure corks are covered by a towel and are pointed away from you and others. Also, ensure the champagne is chilled to at least 45 degrees Fahrenheit before opening. Every year, warm bottles of champagne, coupled with bad cork-removal technique, are responsible for causing serious blinding injuries.

By following a few simple safety tips, you can make sure your holidays are festive and injury-free.

The Michigan Eye-Bank is a 501(c)(3), independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the restoration of sight. It recovers, evaluates and distributes human eye tissue for transplantation. It also supports research into the causes and cures of blinding eye conditions, promotes donation awareness through public and professional education, and provides humanitarian aid to people in need of corneal transplantation throughout the world.