

Your Health Matters

DECK THE HALLS WITH BOUGHS OF HOLLY

I truly love the Christmas holiday! I love the lights, the decorations, and having a real Christmas tree in my house. But in the midst of making my home look festive, I try to remember safety. Christmas candles, strings of lights, and flammable Christmas trees create the risk of fire – and disaster! As you string holiday lights and put up your Christmas tree this year, keep your family and home safe.

Lights

- Choose lights that have been tested by Underwriters' Laboratories and have the UL seal.
- Follow the manufacturers' recommendations and put no more than two strands of lights together on each wall outlet.
- Make sure lights you place outside are approved for outdoor use.
- Inspect lights and don't use any with frayed cords, broken or loose wires, or faulty plugs.
- Always unplug your lights before going to bed or leaving the house.

Candles

- Keep candles out of a child's reach and away from flammable materials.
- Trim candle wicks to ¼ inch before lighting the candle, and re-trim every 2-3 hours.
- Do not burn candles that have lead in the wick.
- Use well-ventilated candle holders that are sturdy and will not tip over. Avoid wooden or plastic holders, which can catch on fire. Be careful with glass candle holders, which can break when hot.
- Never leave candles unattended.
- Blow out all candles before you go to sleep or leave the house.

Trees and decorations

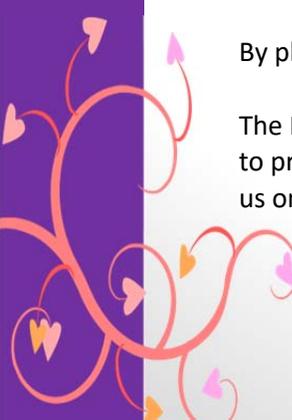
- If you have a real tree, make sure the needles are green and do not break when bent.
- Use a sturdy stand and give the tree plenty of water to keep it from drying out.
- Do not use small ornaments or hooks that small children could choke on.
- Never leave children or pets alone near the tree.

Make sure your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors are working properly and have fresh batteries. Place fire extinguishers around your home and make sure everyone knows how to use them.

If you have pets, don't decorate with tinsel, ribbons, garland, liquid potpourri, sachets or candles. Some plants can also be dangerous to pets. Keep wires, batteries and ornaments out of pets' reach.

By planning ahead you can decorate your home beautifully for the holidays and protect your family.

The Montgomery County Health Department loves taking care of your family, and works every day to protect, promote and improve health in our community. To learn more, call 573-564-2495 or visit us online at www.montgomerycountyhealth.org or on Facebook or Twitter @healthyMOCO. ■



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