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Common and Bizarre Injuries to Avoid this Holiday Season

Each year, the holiday season brings excitement about seeing family, delicious meals, and even opening a few presents. But in addition to his seasonal mirth, families must consider safety issues related to driving long distances in rough conditions, the potential for shopping mall mishaps, and dangers associated with holiday decorations and lights. To help navigate those additional considerations, we've developed a list of some of the most common (though some are quite bizarre) holiday-related injuries and some precautions families can take to avoid trips to the emergency room this winter.

The most consistently dangerous holiday action is driving long distances in dangerous road conditions to reach your holiday destination. Each year, October, November and December account for a disproportionate forty percent of pedestrian accidents, and more than 35 deaths and 2,300 vehicles are reported over Thanksgiving alone, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Of those, 15 deaths and 425 injuries are alcohol related. Drivers can boost their safety by ensuring that their vehicles are prepared for cold conditions. This suggestion is difficult to abide by while traveling long distances, but a good rule of thumb is to stick to major roads to avoid the worst conditions. That, combined with a healthy skepticism of road conditions and an awareness of other drivers, should get families to their destinations safely.

Sadly, you can't avoid holiday dangers simply by staying off the roads. In fact, holiday shoppers must also be careful to avoid crowded malls, slipper sidewalks, and distracted drivers. Two years ago, for example, a Wal-Mart employee was killed on Black Friday as consumers flooded the store. Two shoppers also injured by the mob later filed a \$2 million lawsuit against New York's Nassau County Police Department for its insufficient crowd control. Every year, the media erupts with similar stories that seem to grow more and more outlandish. That same year, for example, two men were killed in a gun fight inside a Toys R Us in Palm Beach, California.

Even decorations can lead to injuries or bruises. The US Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that trinkets lead to more than 12,000 emergency room visits each year due to falls, cuts, and shocks. The US Fire Administration reports that holiday fires kill more than 400 Americans and injure another 1,600 causing a total of \$990 million in damages. Gifts are no safer. In 2006, the "wrap rage" epidemic swept the globe. In honor, Consumer Reports Magazine launched the "Oyster Awards" attempting to pinpoint "America's hardest-to-open packages."

So due to changes in activity during the holiday season, consumers are susceptible to more risks than the remainder of the year. But if you can master dangerous driving conditions, manage crowds at the mall, and be extra careful when dealing with holiday decorations, lights, and gifts, you should be able to navigate the season safely.

More information:

<http://www.gjel.com/blog/protect-your-family-this-holiday-season-most-common-holiday-injuries.html>

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