



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 30, 2006  
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**SPEND THE HOLIDAYS WITH FAMILY THIS YEAR,  
NOT IN THE EMERGENCY ROOM**

*Toy-related Injuries Sent More than 202,000 Children to the Hospital Last Year*

**COLUMBUS** – It seems the holidays keep coming earlier and earlier every year, thanks in large part to retailers. Stores are already stocked with merchandise and decorations to tempt buyers into starting their holiday shopping immediately. And with all the pressures of buying the hottest toy or gadget, it's easy to get swept away.

But before you head to the mall or go online, remember to make sure that the gift you purchase will be a safe one. Unfortunately, thousands of children are injured every year by toys. In 2005, the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated that 202,300 children were treated in the emergency room for toy-related injuries. And, 94,000 of those injuries were to the face and head, including the eyes. Eye injuries consisted of lacerations, abrasions and foreign bodies.

Air, BB and spring guns accounted for a large portion of the documented injuries to children's eyes. Any toys that shoot projectiles are always dangerous. Even common products such as pens, pencils, crayons and other art supplies, were involved in many accidents.

"It's important to make sure that every toy a child plays with is age appropriate," said Sherill K. Williams, President and CEO of Prevent Blindness Ohio. "90 percent of all eye injuries are preventable but we have to closely monitor kids to ensure their safety."

Prevent Blindness Ohio has declared December as Safe Toys and Gifts Month and is urging all toy buyers to read the labels and pay attention to what their children are playing with. The group suggests the following tips to help make this holiday season a safe one for children:

- Avoid toys that shoot or include parts that fly off. Slingshots and even water guns are dangerous because they invite children to target other kids. BB guns should not even be considered toys.

-More-

## **Prevent Blindness Ohio Offers Tips on Buying Safe Toys**

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- Inspect toys for sturdiness. Your child's toys should be durable with no sharp edges or points. The toys should also withstand impact.
- Look for the letters "ASTM." This means the product meets the national safety standards set by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).
- Don't give toys with small parts to young children. Young kids tend to put things in their mouths, increasing the risk of choking.
- Read directions carefully and follow suggested age levels. Ask yourself if the toy is right for your child's ability and age.
- Repair or throw away damaged toys.
- Keep toys meant for older children away from younger ones.
- Make a list of safety rules and share them with your child. If your child is playing with friends, tell everyone your safety rules.
- Remain aware of recalled products. For further information on toy and product recalls, visit the U.S. Product Safety Commission Web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

For more information on safe toys and gifts, please call Prevent Blindness Ohio at 800-301-2020 or visit [www.pbohio.org](http://www.pbohio.org)

### **ABOUT PREVENT BLINDNESS OHIO**

Prevent Blindness Ohio, founded in 1957, is Ohio's leading volunteer, nonprofit public health organization dedicated to preventing blindness and preserving sight. It serves all 88 Ohio counties, providing direct services to more than 800,000 Ohioans annually and educating millions of consumers about what they can do to protect and preserve their precious gift of sight. Prevent Blindness Ohio is an affiliate of Prevent Blindness America, the country's second-oldest national voluntary health organization. For more information or to make a contribution, visit our website at [www.pbohio.org](http://www.pbohio.org) or call 800-301-2020.

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