

WHY HOLIDAYS CAN BE DANGEROUS FOR KIDS

Holidays can be dangerous for kids, but it's not just the fireworks, jack-o-lanterns or Christmas decorations that cause injuries. More often, holiday-related injuries are caused by "everyday" household situations like slipping on the stairs, or by activities such as bike-riding or playing football. The study, "Epidemiology of Pediatric Holiday-Related Injuries Presenting to U.S. Emergency Departments," in the May issue of *Pediatrics* (released early online April 5), examined 5.7 million holiday-related injuries sustained by children between 1997 and 2006. The greatest number of injuries occurred in the 5-day period surrounding Labor Day, followed by Memorial Day, Fourth of July and Halloween. Most of the injuries were caused by sports and recreation activities or were related to home structures/furnishings, not holiday-specific activities. Injuries from fireworks were more likely to occur on the Fourth of July than any other holiday, yet fireworks accounted for only 2.9 percent of Fourth of July injuries. Children younger than 5 years old were most at risk of injury. Public health officials and the media have traditionally emphasized preventing holiday-specific injuries, but study authors suggest these efforts should also look at preventing everyday injuries. Parents must continue to be watchful for injury risks even in the excitement of a holiday celebration, and adolescents should be cautioned against becoming reckless because of the holiday atmosphere.

[Embargoed until Monday, April 5, at 12:01 a.m. ET. To request the full text of this study, contact the AAP Department of Communications. To request an interview with the study authors, call 614-355-0495].