

## Toy Safety When Buying Gifts for Children

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MIDLAND - Buying gifts for little ones can be tricky if you're not careful. Doctor Sudip Bose is an ER doctor at Medical Center Hospital in Odessa. He's also a professor in Chicago.

Doctor Bose explained why you need to be aware when getting toys, "This is a real issue. In the year 2010, for example, there were 250,000 emergency room related visits from toy injuries. In 2007, there were over 19 million toys recalled because of safety issues."

But, when you're looking at a toy, how can you know if it will be safe?

"There's not a one size fits all perfect toy. The thing to do here is to follow instructions, it's going to be age dependent. All these can be fun but you have to think worst case scenario, what could be dangerous about this toy?" Bose said.

There are certain things you need to keep in mind as you shop.

"The jump rope, in my opinion, promotes physical activity, I'd say is a good toy but it can also be a strangulation hazard. Something as simple as markers or crayons, you have to make sure all aspects of it are non-toxic," Bose said.

When you buy a toy for an older child and you have a younger one at home, could they get their hands on it?

"You have to think for each toy, how can it break and become dangerous little pieces. How can it break and become sharp edges, how can the packaging hurt the child, how else can this toy affect another baby. So is there a sibling or younger child in the house, even though you bought the toy for an older child," Bose said.

In a worst case scenario, your child gets their hands on a small toy, puts it in their mouth, and starts to choke, Dr. Bose explained what you should do, "One quick basic rule is is the child coughing? If the child is coughing, that means their own body is trying to spit out that part that they're choking on. In that case, leave the child alone. Because the child may have a partial obstruction and their coughing and trying to cough it out. If you go up to the child and start trying to do the Heimlich or some maneuver, you could turn that partial obstruction to a full obstruction. Then all of a sudden their airway is completely closed," Bose said.

If there is a question of choking, get them checked out to avoid further problems. Dr. Bose suggests that parents take a hands-on approach.

"I encourage all parents to take some sort of CPR class. Some sort of basic first aid class, just to have basic understanding. Again, you want to be prepared for these things before it actually happens," Bose said.

Here's more advice on what to consider when picking out a toy: Does it promote intellectual stimulation, will it create social interaction, is exercise a part of the toy and is it safe?

"These are things where you don't just pick up a toy and toss it in your cart. You have to look at the key things," Bose said.

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