

Mission:
To protect, promote & improve the health
of all people in Florida through integrated
state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 22, 2014

Contact: Communications Office
(850) 245-4111

THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH OFFERS TIPS FOR A SAFE AND HEALTHY HOLIDAY SEASON

TALLAHASSEE — As the holiday season kicks into high gear, the Florida Department of Health would like to remind everyone to stay safe, prepared and aware. With the excitement of the holidays in the air, it can be easy to forget about safety precautions and careful behavior.

“The Department of Health encourages everyone to put safety into practice, particularly during the holidays,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “We want all Floridians and visitors to have memories of a joyous holiday season.”

The Department of Health offers the following tips to ensure a safe and healthy holiday season:

- **Handle and Prepare Food Safely.** As you prepare holiday meals, keep yourself and your family safe from food-related illness. Always wash your hands before preparing foods and after handling raw meat. Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs (including their juices) away from ready-to-eat foods and eating surfaces. Cook foods to the proper temperature and refrigerate promptly. Do not leave perishable foods out for more than two hours. Also, be aware of ingredients that may cause allergic reactions.
- **Practice Fire Safety.** Use flame-resistant, flame-retardant and non-combustible materials and keep candles away from Christmas trees, decorations and combustible materials. Before you string lights on your house or trees, inspect the strands, to make sure there aren't any frayed cords or cracked bulbs. Also, don't use indoor lights outside and vice versa. Check the tag on the string of lights to be sure. Be sure to install or check smoke alarms, and unplug your Christmas tree during sleeping hours.
- **Travel Safely.** When traveling, have a trusted friend or neighbor keep an eye on your home and avoid speaking to strangers about your travel plans. Avoid driving alone or at night and always be aware of your surroundings. Text messaging can wait until you safely arrive at your destination. Always park in well-lit areas and do not leave the car unoccupied with the motor running or with children inside.
- **Prevent Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning:** As temperatures drop, the potential for CO poisonings rise. CO is a highly poisonous gas produced by burning fuels

such as gasoline, natural gas, propane, kerosene, charcoal, and wood. The Department discourages citizens from burning charcoal inside a house, garage, vehicle, or tent, including in a fireplace.

- **Watch the Kids.** Children need to be watched closely, especially when they're eating and playing. Keep potentially-dangerous toys, food, drinks, household items, choking hazards (like coins and hard candy) and other objects out of kids' reach. Do not leave children unattended around space heaters or the fireplace.

The Department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. During 2014, the Department is recognizing 125 years of public health in Florida with educational opportunities and events. Please visit www.FLHealth125.gov for more information.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/HealthyFla). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit www.floridahealth.gov.

###