

**FAMILY & CONSUMER SCIENCES**

# Pre-School Pages



A newsletter for parents of pre-schoolers packed with food, facts & fun from your local county extension office

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## Life Savers

### Christmas Tree Safety Tips



For many people, decorating the Christmas tree is a favorite part of the holiday. The National Safety Council offers some safety tips to make sure a mishap doesn't spoil your holiday season.

#### Christmas trees

Natural and artificial Christmas trees start an average of 250 home structure fires each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association. These fires cause approximately 14 deaths, 26 injuries and \$13.8 million in property damage yearly.

Try to select a fresh tree by looking for one that is green. The needles of pines and spruces should bend and not break and should be hard to pull off the branches. On fir species, a needle pulled from a fresh tree will snap when bent, much like a fresh carrot. Also, look for a trunk sticky with sap.

Cut off about two inches of the trunk and put the tree in a sturdy, water-holding stand. Keep the stand filled with water so the tree does not dry out quickly.

Stand your tree away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources. Make sure the tree does not block foot traffic or doorways.

If you use an artificial tree, choose one that is tested and labeled as fire resistant. Artificial trees with built-in electrical systems should have the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) label.

Line-voltage holiday or decorative lights start an average of 170 home structure fires each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association. These fires cause approximately 7 deaths, 17 injuries and \$7.9 million in property damage yearly.

#### Tree lights

Only use indoor lights indoors (and outdoor lights only outdoors). Look for the UL label. Check lights for broken or cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections. Replace or repair any damaged light sets.

Also, use no more than three light sets on any one extension cord. Extension cords should be placed against the wall to avoid tripping hazards, but do not run cords under rugs.

Turn off all lights on trees and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.

#### Tree ornaments

Always use the proper step stool or ladder to reach high places.

Source: National Safety Council



## Let's Play Scented Ornaments

Spice up holiday gifts with whimsical cutouts that double as fragrant (but non-edible!) tree ornaments that you can make with your preschoolers.

Materials needed:

- 1 cup regular applesauce (not the chunky kind!)
- 1 ½ cups ground cinnamon
- 1/3 cup white glue
- Assorted cookie cutters
- Plastic drinking straw
- Colored ribbon

In a mixing bowl, stir together ingredients. Form the mixture into a ball, wrap it in plastic and chill for at least 30 minutes until the “dough” stiffens. Sprinkle more cinnamon on a cutting board or a surface lined with waxed-paper and turn the chilled dough onto it. Dust a rolling pin with cinnamon and use it to roll out the dough to a ¼-inch thickness (if thinner, the ornaments will be too fragile). Cut out decorative shapes with assorted cookie cutter or a butter knife, then use the straw to make a hole through the top center of each cutout. Let the ornaments air-dry completely before stringing them with ribbon.

Source: <http://familyfun.go.com>



## Kids' Care Healthy Holiday Traditions

“The children were all nestled snug in their beds while visions of sugarplums danced in their heads.” Holidays bring candy, cookies and other sweets. What is a parent to do? You want your children to eat healthy and you want them to enjoy your family’s holiday traditions. All foods can be part of a healthy diet.

Help your family eat healthy during the holidays:

- Don’t skip meals. Your child may eat large amounts of sweets if he skips a meal.
- Try to open presents before eating. Small children often find it hard to eat when waiting for presents.
- Don’t expect perfect behavior when eating holiday meals. There is too much excitement! Relax and have fun.
- Limit the variety of sweets. If there is a large variety of sweets, you and your child will be tempted to eat more – you will want to try them all!

- Bake sweets with added nutrition. Use peanut butter, oatmeal, cereals and raisins when baking.
- Enjoy sweets in moderation. Your child learns by watching how you and other adults eat and enjoy sweets.
- Don’t bribe your child to eat meals by offering sweets.

Enjoy the Holiday Season! Enjoy your family!

Source: University of Missouri Cooperative Extension Service

## Let's Eat Easy Chicken Pot Pie



- 1 2/3 cups frozen mixed vegetables, thawed
- 1 cup cut-up cooked chicken
- 1 (10 ¾ ounce) can condensed low-fat cream of chicken soup
- 1 cup reduced-fat baking mix
- ½ cup milk
- 1 egg

1. Wash hands and any cooking surface.
2. Pre-heat oven to 400°F.
3. Mix vegetables, chicken, and soup in ungreased, 9-inch pie plate.
4. Stir remaining ingredients in a mixing bowl with fork until blended. Pour over vegetables and chicken in pie plate.
5. Bake 30 minutes or until golden brown.
6. Let cool for 5 minutes and serve.

**Nutrition Facts per serving:** 190 calories, 4 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 60 mg cholesterol, 460 mg sodium, 25 g total carbohydrate, 1 g dietary fiber, 4 g sugars; 12 g protein

**Yield:** 6 servings

Source: USDA Recipe Finder



Sincerely,

*Laure Het*  
County Extension Agent  
for Family & Consumer Sciences

