

December 6, 2013

## Don't let your holiday be a hazard

A local health expert has issued a reminder to families to take the time to keep their holidays happy, healthy and hazard-free.

Sydney South West Local Health District (SWS LHD) Acting Director of Health Promotion, Mandy Williams, said falling Christmas trees, broken ornaments, decorative candles, overloaded electrical sockets and combustible paper trimmings could all potentially harm toddlers or children if parents did not take adequate care.

“Christmas time is such an exciting part of the year for many families and I know how easy it is for parents to get caught up in all the preparations and simply forget to make sure everything is safe as possible for their kids,” Ms Williams said.

“For instance, tree ornaments, light bulbs, flickering candles, tinsel and small toys act like magnets to small children but they are all potential choking hazards so they need to be kept away or secured at all times.

“Many toddlers also can't resist the urge to touch and pull on the Christmas tree yet one determined tug can send it crashing down on them in seconds if it is not secured in its stand, or to the wall or ceiling.

“Christmas lights also are an attraction – they're bright and hold the attention of little ones - so keep them out of reach and protect the power source, and don't overload power boards.

“Party poppers and other Christmas toys should never be pointed directly at anyone and all plastic wrapping and ties need to be disposed of immediately,” Ms Williams said.

“Parents should also remember that not all homes they visit with children are 'child-proof', so it pays to be aware of potential hazards in new environments.

“It only takes a little time to be safe and ensure that the whole family has a memorable and happy Christmas and New Year,” she said.