

Atrium Health Navicent Offers Tips to Decorate Safely this Holiday Season

Avoid injuries and unexpected hospital visits by taking proper safety precautions while decorating

MACON, Ga., Nov. 28, 2022 – 'Tis the season to deck the halls and spruce up your home with holiday decor. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, during the holiday season, there are about 160 decorating-related injuries each day. Most of the injuries were related to falls.

As part of Atrium Health Navicent's ongoing commitment to community safety and preparedness, the health system reminds individuals to take proper safety precautions when decorating for the holidays. Take the following steps to ensure you and your family avoid unexpected injury this holiday season:

Personal safety

- **Ladders:** When using an outdoor ladder to hang lights, or to climb into an attic space, there are several safety tips to keep in mind. Remember the four-to-one rule to help you get the angle right for the ladder. A ladder should be positioned one foot out for every four feet up. For example, if a ladder is leaning against the top of a 20-foot wall, the base should be five feet away from the wall. When climbing the ladder, make sure you have three points of contact with the ladder at all times — either two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand. It's also a good idea to have a family member hold the ladder securely as you climb.
- **Heavy boxes:** Follow these tips for safely lifting heavy boxes of holiday decorations. Plan your path for carrying the box before you lift it. Make sure the path is clear of obstacles. Place your hands around the bottom of the box, not the sides. Bend from the knees, not the back, to lift. Never raise a box higher than your shoulders. Seek help when needed if the box is too heavy or you are in danger of dropping it.
- **Fall-proof your home:** As holiday décor moves into pathways and electrical cords help light up the night, be sure that these added items don't pose fall-risks for family and visitors. Make sure your front door is clear of obstacles and remains well-lit at night. Keep steps clutter-free, and keep handrails accessible — even if wreathed in garland. Be sure electrical cords are run along the walls of your rooms, and not across the middle. If cords are in doorways, be sure to tape them down securely. Place Christmas trees out of the way of traffic and do not block doorways.

Candles

- Always exercise caution when using lit candles in your holiday celebrations or decorations. Consider using battery-operated candles instead.
- Candles should be placed away from walls, curtains, or flammable materials.
- Lit candles should be monitored at all times.
- Ensure the candle is completely extinguished after use.

Lights

- Handle holiday lights with care, checking sockets, wiring, and bulbs before use.
- Do not use electric lights on metallic trees.
- Stringing lights from a ladder takes patience and balance. Always have a helper or two to balance the ladder and assist as needed.
- Turn off all lights and other lit decorations when going to bed or before you leave the house.

Decorations

- Avoid glass ornaments and look for shatter-proof options.

- Place trees away from fireplaces, radiators, and other heat sources.
- Keep ornaments out of reach for small children and pets, as they could pose a choking hazard.
- Holiday plants are pretty, but can be deadly. Mistletoe, poinsettia, and holly berries are all toxic if ingested. Keep them out of the reach of small children and pets.
- When decorating outside, make sure decorations are labeled as safe for outdoor use.

“While decorating for the holidays is a fun way to kick off the season, it’s important to keep safety in mind so you can avoid injuries that might put a damper on the celebration,” said Dr. John Wood, medical director of the Emergency Center at Atrium Health Navicent The Medical Center. “Keep cords and decorations out of walkways to reduce fall risks, keep small ornaments that could be choking hazards out of small children’s reach, and be careful when lifting heavy boxes and climbing ladders.”

If an accident or injury occurs, seek appropriate medical treatment. For emergency situations, call 911 or seek care at the nearest emergency center. Atrium Health Navicent offers emergency care at the following locations:

- Atrium Health Navicent Beverly Knight Olson Children's Hospital (888 Pine St., Macon)
- Atrium Health Navicent The Medical Center (770 Pine St., Macon)
- Atrium Health Navicent Peach Emergency Department (1960 Hwy 247 Connector, Byron)
- Atrium Health Navicent Baldwin (821 North Cobb St., Milledgeville)
- Monroe County Hospital, Atrium Health Navicent Partner (88 Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Forsyth)
- Putnam General Hospital, Atrium Health Navicent Partner (101 Greensboro Road, Eatonton)

For non-life-threatening injuries, visit your nearest urgent care provider. Atrium Health Navicent provides urgent care at three Macon-Bibb County locations.

- Atrium Health Navicent Urgent Care North (3400 Riverside Drive, Macon)
- Atrium Health Navicent Urgent Care East (1339 Gray Highway, Macon)
- Atrium Health Navicent Urgent Care Northwest (5925 Zebulon Road, Macon)

About Atrium Health Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of healthcare in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation’s leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit www.NavicentHealth.org.

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