

SAFETY SENSE

Emergency Department Nurses Offer Safety Tips

(NAPSA)—One of the most important gifts you can receive is the gift of safety. Accidents lead to about 20 million emergency department visits a year. Here are some tips and reminders from the Emergency Nurses Association's Institute for Injury Prevention/Emergency Nurses CARE and the National Safety Council to keep you and your family out of the hospital:

At Home

- Don't leave burning candles unattended. Keep them away from trees, greenery, curtains and other flammable items.

- Shoveling snow increases your heart rate and blood pressure, so warm up first with some stretches, pace yourself and make sure you lift with your legs, not your back. People over 40 or who are inactive should be especially careful.

On The Road

- Prepare your car for winter. Check all systems as well as tires, the battery and fluid levels. Be prepared for road emergencies with a properly inflated spare tire, wheel wrench, and tripod jack.

- Keep a shovel, jumper cables, tool kit, a warm blanket and a bag of salt or cat litter in the trunk of your vehicle. Other essential emergency supplies include reflective triangles, first-aid kit, windshield cleaner, ice scraper, snow brush, bottled water and high-energy, non-perishable foods.



Be sure all children are in age-appropriate restraints.

- Going on a long trip? Share the drive to avoid road fatigue, and make frequent stops to stretch your legs.

- Buckle up—every trip, every time. Many states now have primary seat-belt laws, so you could be stopped and ticketed if you and your passengers aren't buckled up.

- Be sure all children are in the back seat in age-appropriate restraints. Infants and toddlers should always be properly restrained in child safety seats. Don't move an older child into an adult shoulder harness until he or she is at least 4'9" and weighs at least 80 pounds.

- Distracted driving is a factor in 20 to 30 percent of all crashes. Something as simple as tuning your radio or looking away from the road can cause an accident. When driving, don't reach behind you, pick things up off the floor, or perform personal grooming. Using

your cell phone while driving is another risky distraction.

In Your Community

- A smart host or partygoer puts the emphasis on fun and conversation, not alcohol. If you're hosting, provide high-protein foods like cheese, meats, fish and eggs. Have plenty of non-alcoholic beverages on hand—soft drinks, juices, coffee, tea and bottled water are popular alternatives. Respect your guests' wishes; don't push unwanted drinks on them.

- If you're a partygoer, be sure a designated driver is part of your group. If you're going alone, arrange ahead of time to have a friend or relative act as a stand-by chauffeur if you think you may overindulge.

- If you're the parent of a party-going teen, contact the host's parents to make sure that no alcohol or drugs will be permitted and that a parent will be present.

- Discuss with your teen how he or she will get home from the party. Assure him that you or a trusted friend can be called at any time to provide a ride home.

- Help your teen develop strategies for saying "no" to cope with unexpected situations, such as unwanted sexual attention or pressure to use drugs or alcohol.

You can find more safety tips at the Emergency Nurses Association Web site at www.ena.org.