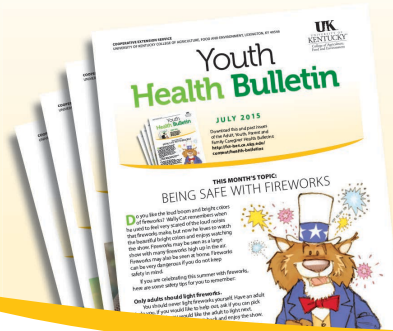


Youth Health Bulletin



DECEMBER 2015

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC: HOLIDAY TRADITIONS

Wally Cat is super excited about the holidays! He really enjoys seeing all the sights and sounds that this time of year brings. He REALLY likes the treats that come along too. But Wally Cat was wondering — why do we have to sing carols and decorate trees? Where does the candy cane idea come from? What are the holidays like for other kids on the other side of the world? Do you ever wonder? Here are some of the things Wally Cat learned about the holidays:

Singing carols

The earliest carol, as we know them today, was written in 1410. We don't know very much about it. But we do know that songs were written to keep families entertained and they were mostly sung in the home rather than at a church. In the 1600s, singing and the celebration of Christmas stopped, and people had to sing in secret. When people were allowed

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Don't eat too many sweets!

Try to also eat some fruit and veggies if they are offered.

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to openly sing carols again, often it was only a group of singers who would sing the carols as they traveled to towns and villages. Have you ever heard the song "Silent Night"? This song was originally written in the German language and there are over 40 different versions of it now.

Decorating trees

Nobody really knows when fir trees started being used as Christmas trees. It was the 1500s before there was any documentation of the use of trees in the celebration of Christmas and the New Year. It was much later that people started to bring the trees into their homes. In Germany, people would decorate the trees with things to eat such as gingerbread and apples. They may have used a few glass ornaments as well. It was not until the late 1800s that the trees became popular in the United States.

Candy canes

The original candy cane came from Germany over 250 years ago. But they did not look like the red and white striped ones we see now. They were actually just white sugar sticks. The story is that the leader of the choir was worried that children would not stay seated all through the church service at Christmas, so he gave them the sweet treat to keep them quiet. The red strips and peppermint flavor was added around 1900 and in 1920 a man from Georgia made the curved shape that we know today.

Holidays in Italy

In Italy, the whole month of December is a time for celebration. On December 6, many families celebrate St. Nicholas Day. Children write letters to St. Nicholas asking for gifts and they hang up either a sock or put a plate on the table on St. Nicholas Day's eve. Sometimes even a St. Nicholas visits the homes of

children. If the children have been good throughout the last year, they will get some fruits, nuts and sweets from St. Nicholas. The naughty ones usually also get a sweet, but also may get a lump of coal.

Holidays in Australia

In Australia, December is actually summer time! They still celebrate the holidays the way many of us do — with family and friends. But because it is so warm, they may have celebrations at the beach.

Safety this holiday

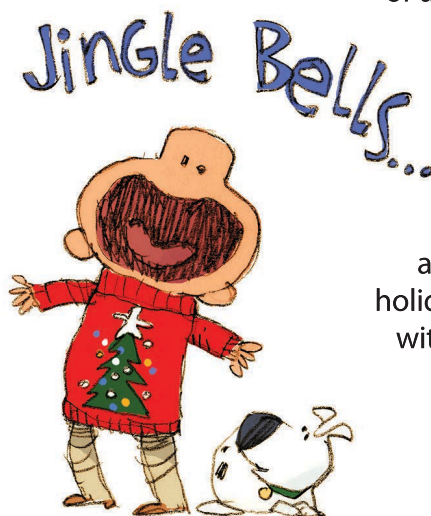
The holidays bring many exciting things: parties, extra time at home and maybe even travel. This holiday season, make sure you stay safe with the following tips:

- When you are in the car, make sure to wear your seatbelt!
- Don't eat too many sweets! Even though there are lots of parties and celebrations, try to also eat some fruit and veggies if they are offered.
- Don't climb on furniture to hang up decorations. If you are decorating a tree or just around the house, make sure you do not fall. Use a ladder if you need to get up high and make sure to have an adult with you.
- Although it may seem like you do not want to sleep, or perhaps you get to stay up late a night or two, make sure that you get plenty of rest. Sleeping will help you to stay healthy.

Wally Cat hopes you and your family enjoy the time that you get to spend together. And that you have a happy, healthy and safe holiday.

SOURCE:

<http://www.whychristmas.com>



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Health Bulletin

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