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**Florida Eye Microsurgical Institute & the American Academy of Ophthalmology
Offer Tips for an Injury-Free Holiday Season**

Boynton Beach FL, December 2nd, 2013... Imagine a BB gun pellet striking your child's eye with enough force to knock him to the ground. Sadly, scenarios like this happen way too frequently around the holidays and can unfortunately cause serious eye injuries. In recognition of Safe Toys and Celebrations Month, the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the doctors of Florida Eye Microsurgical Institute want to remind parents of the dangers that toys can pose to children's eyes, and offer tips on how to choose safe toys for gift-giving.

Children receive all types of potentially unsafe presents during the holidays, including BB guns, darts, pellet guns and paintball guns. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, there were more than 265,000 toy-related injuries treated in U.S. emergency rooms in 2012; nearly three quarters of those injured were children under age 15, and almost half affected the head or face.

With so many toys being recalled or having the potential to cause injuries, many parents are wondering what toys are safe. "It's important for parents to choose a toy that is appropriate for their child's age, abilities, and the parents' willingness to supervise use of the toy," said Florida Eye's Pediatric & Adult Strabismus Specialist Dr. Lee Friedman. Also, adds Dr. Friedman, "For those planning on giving sports equipment to children as gifts, don't forget to include protective eyewear. Sports-related eye injuries can cause permanent vision loss and account for about 40,000 eye injuries annually."

Common eye injuries from these toys include corneal abrasion, ocular hyphema, traumatic cataract, and increased intraocular pressure. These and other injuries sometimes require children to undergo eye surgery. In most cases, the victims of these toy-related injuries were not wearing protective eyewear.

Follow these tips for a safe holiday season:

- Avoid purchasing toys with sharp, protruding or projectile parts.
- Make sure children have appropriate supervision when playing with potentially hazardous toys or games that could cause injury.
- If you plan to give sports equipment, provide appropriate protective eyewear with polycarbonate lenses. Check with your optometrist or ophthalmologist to learn about protective gear recommended for your child's sport.
- Check labels for age recommendations and be sure to select gifts that are appropriate for a child's age and maturity.
- Keep toys that are made for older children away from younger children.
- The branches and needles of Christmas trees can be hazardous to the eyes, so be especially careful when untying your tree. The branches can burst forward, hitting and injuring eyes.
- Glass ornaments should be hung out of a child's reach to avoid potential injury.

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Florida Eye Microsurgical Institute offers a full range of total ophthalmologic care, including routine eye care and examinations, pediatric eye care, dry eyes, advanced corneal, retinal and cataract procedures, laser treatments, macular degeneration, diabetic and glaucoma procedures and various other sophisticated treatments. With its own pediatric wing and fully accredited outpatient surgical center in Boynton Beach, the Institute has additional offices in Boca Raton, Wellington and Juno Beach. Also at Florida Eye with Dr. Friedman is Dr. Randy Katz, Retina/Vitreous Specialist, Dr. Barry Schechter, Director of Cornea & Cataract Services, Glaucoma, External Disease & Comprehensive Ophthalmology and Dr. Jason Gorscak, Refractive Cataract Surgery, Glaucoma & Comprehensive Ophthalmologic Care.

Florida Eye is a premier center for national clinical trial studies. For information on current or future studies contact Debbie Rankin or call (561) 736-5055.

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