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The 30-Minute Guide to Getting Your Home Ready for Guests

Preparing for a party always takes longer than you expect. Here are nine expert tricks to make the most of that last half hour.

Get Rid of Safety Hazards

Your Christmas tree has a very dark secret: Despite all its finery, it's a dangerous guest to have at a party. "Believe it or not," says Melissa Marchwick, executive vice president of the babysitting service [Sittercity](#), "pine needles are a fairly significant choking hazard." She recommends sweeping them up after you've secured the tree with string (to keep crowds from knocking it over) and suggests that you should avoid breakable decorations. "Not only can those be expensive to replace, but those shards can be hard to get up, and kids can hurt themselves. Keep glass ornaments out of the reach of little ones." She also notes that tablecloths can be an unexpected problem: "Everyone's seen the movies where the kid grabs on to the end, and then the whole turkey is on the ground, so keep your runner short or use placemats."

Read more: <http://www.oprah.com/home/Getting-Your-Home-Ready-for-a-Party-Quickly/4#ixzz1fgzsZLpx>