

Nintendon't

**By Reg P. Wydeven
January 8, 2011**

This year, Santa left Nintendo DSs under the tree for my kids for Christmas. My daughter loves art, and she got a game called 'Crafting Mama.' In the game, she sculpts clay pots, makes candles and creates other cool projects. My son got the new Super Mario Brothers game, and he once again braves the sewers to rescue Princess Peach.

The kids got some awesome presents this year, but the DSs were the clear favorites. We had a terrific Christmas break, which included ice skating, snowboarding, sledding and playing tons of board games. However, the kids still loved playing their DSs.

If we let them play as long as they wanted, I would be afraid they would get carpal tunnel syndrome in their thumbs and their eyes would fall out. Well, if the Easter Bunny brings them the upcoming 3DS, Nintendo warns that my fears may not be too far off.

The video game juggernaut released a statement on its Japanese website stating that children under the age of 6 who play 3-D games on their highly anticipated new handheld gaming system may stunt the growth of their eyes. Nintendo claims specialists believe that "there is a possibility that 3-D images, which send different images to the left and right eye, could affect the development of vision in small children." The 3-D devices use technology that rapidly flashes these separate images to create a sense of depth. Accordingly, the company recommends that players take breaks from the games as often as every half-hour or hour.

Some industry insiders speculate that the warning was issued as a prospective effort to fend off litigation, in part due to prior controversies over the health impact of games. After an outbreak of epileptic seizures in video game players in the early 1990s, Nintendo began warning consumers that flashing lights on its game systems could trigger such seizures.

To further protect young players' eyes, Nintendo allows parents to turn off the 3-D functionality of the device or only allow it to be accessed by using a password.

Nintendo's warning about the dangers of 3-D is just the latest in a long string of cautions issued by other manufacturers in the medium. Sony and Toshiba have also warned consumers about ill effects from watching video or playing games in three dimensions. Sony recommends consulting a doctor before allowing children to use the 3-D functionality on its PlayStation game console. Toshiba advises closely monitoring children while they are watching its new 3-D TVs that don't require glasses.

These companies, in addition to Panasonic and Samsung, issued warnings that 3-D television can cause nausea, dizziness and seizures, especially in young people, pregnant women and intoxicated individuals. All the companies also say that the technology can cause adult viewers to tire and feel sick.

The new Nintendo 3DS is expected to retail for \$300 and will be released in Japan in February and then in the United States in March. The handheld device resembles the current DSs, with two screens that fold open. The top screen shows images in 3-D without requiring glasses.

All I know is that watching things in 3-D makes me nauseous. So if my daughter gets a Nintendo 3DS and asks me to play Crafting Mama, she may have a Puking Papa.