

Information From Your Eye M.D.

FIREWORKS AND EYE SAFETY

The American Academy of Ophthalmology acknowledges public fireworks displays as a part of American culture. However, due to their potential for ocular injuries, fireworks are dangerous and should be left to professional firework handlers.

Dangers of Fireworks

- There are approximately 8,500 fireworks-related injuries each year in the United States. Of these, about 2,000 are eye injuries. One-third of these injuries result in permanent eye damage and one-fourth in permanent vision loss or blindness. Almost one in 20 victims lose all useful vision or require removal of the injured eye.
- One-fourth of all eye injuries caused by consumer fireworks happen to bystanders.
- Three-fourths of all fireworks-related eye injuries happen to boys between the ages of 13 and 15.
- The single most dangerous kind of firework is the bottle rocket, which flies erratically, often causing bystander injuries.
- For children under age 5, sparklers account for three-quarters of all firework injuries. Young children find these sticks of fire – burning as hot as 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit – irresistible to touch.

Safety Tips

- Never let children play with fireworks of any kind, including sparklers.
- View public fireworks displays from a safe distance.
- Respect safety barriers set up to allow pyrotechnicians (the professionals who put on fireworks shows) to do their jobs safely.
- Leave the lighting of fireworks to trained professionals.

- If you find unexploded fireworks, don't touch them. Immediately contact your local fire or police department.
- All pyrotechnicians should wear safety goggles.

Where Can I Get More Information?

Your Eye M.D. is the best source of information on eye health and safety.

If you'd like more information on eye safety, please visit the American Academy of Ophthalmology's public information Web site at www.medem.com/eyemd.

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