**News Release**

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**Make Sure Protective Eyewear is on Your Christmas Shopping List**

[INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] *and the American Academy of Ophthalmology urge the public to celebrate with an eye on safety*

<INSERT CITY, STATE>– [INSERT DATE] — In the beloved holiday movie, A Christmas Story, Ralphie attempts to convince his parents and Santa that a Red Ryder BB gun is the perfect Christmas gift. They all reject his pleas with the same warning: "You'll shoot your eye out." While you may not literally shoot your eye out, a new study in [*Ophthalmology Retina*](https://www.ophthalmologyretina.org/article/S2468-6530(17)30767-4/fulltext) – a journal of the American Academy of Ophthalmology – shows that BB and pellet guns do blind children every year.

And, the number of eye injuries related to such nonpowder guns are increasing at an alarming rate. Another [study](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/141/2/e20173083) published earlier this year showed an increase of almost 170 percent over the last 23 years. If toy guns are on your shopping list, [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] and the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](https://www.aao.org/) urge you to also give the gift of protective eyewear. Protective eyewear and proper guidance make BB, pellet and paintball gun activities safer for children.

To prevent [eye injuries](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/preventing-injuries), ophthalmologists – physicians who specialize in medical and surgical eye care – share the following tips.

* **Buy the proper eye protection**. Always wear [eye protection](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/injuries-protective-eyewear) that meets [appropriate national standards](https://www.astm.org/Standards/F2879.htm) when using nonpowder guns.
* **Get a target**. Have children shoot BB and pellet guns at paper or gel targets with a backstop to trap BBs or pellets.
* **Educate** **children**. Teach them proper safety precautions for handling and using non-powder guns.
* **Be present**. Ensure that there is always appropriate adult supervision.
* **Know what to do (and what not to)if an eye injury occurs**. Seek immediate medical attention from an ophthalmologist. As you wait for medical help, make sure to never to touch, rub, apply pressure, or try to remove any object stuck in the eye. If an eye injury occurs, follow these [important care and treatment guidelines](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/injuries).

“Ophthalmologists see firsthand the devastating damage toy guns can inflict on the eyes; children are blinded,” said Dianna Seldomridge, M.D., MBA, clinical spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. “The good news is, most of these injuries are avoidable. Protective eyewear and adult supervision make non-powder gun activities much safer for children. If you can’t resist the Ralphies in your life, buy protective eyewear.”

[INSERT YOUR SPOKESPERSON’S QUOTE HERE]

To learn more ways to keep your eyes healthy, visit the American Academy of Ophthalmology’s [EyeSmart](https://www.aao.org/eye-health)® website.

**About the American Academy of Ophthalmology**

The American Academy of Ophthalmology is the world’s largest association of eye physicians and surgeons. A global community of 32,000 medical doctors, we protect sight and empower lives by setting the standards for ophthalmic education and advocating for our patients and the public. We innovate to advance our profession and to ensure the delivery of the highest-quality eye care. Our EyeSmart® program provides the public with the most trusted information about eye health. For more information, visit [aao.org](http://www.aao.org/).

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