

Watch out for eyes when champagne corks fly

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Protect yourself and guests when unleashing powerful bottled-up pressure.

(HealthDay)—If you plan to pop a bottle of Champagne or sparkling wine over the holidays, make sure you do it safely, the American Academy of Ophthalmology says.

Warm bottles of Champagne combined with improper cork removal can cause serious, potentially blinding eye injuries. The pressure inside a bottle is powerful enough to launch a cork at 50 miles per hour—fast enough to shatter glass.

"When a Champagne cork flies, you really have no time to react and protect your delicate eyes," Dr. Monica Monica, an [ophthalmologist](#) and spokeswoman for the AAO, said in an academy news release.

"Uncontrolled Champagne corks can lead to painful [eye injuries](#) and devastating [vision loss](#)," she said. "We don't want anyone to end up ringing in the year on an ophthalmologist's surgery table."

Potential eye injuries from a flying cork include rupture of the eye wall, acute glaucoma, [retinal detachment](#), ocular bleeding, dislocation of the lens and damage to the eye's surrounding [bone structure](#). In some cases, these injuries require emergency eye surgery or can lead to blindness in the damaged eye.

The AAO offered the following advice on how to properly open a bottle of champagne:

- Chill Champagne and sparkling wine to 45 degrees or colder before opening. A warm bottle's cork is more likely to pop unexpectedly.
- Do not shake the bottle. Shaking increases the cork's exit speed and increases the risk that someone will suffer a severe eye injury.
- Point the bottle at a 45-degree angle away from yourself and people nearby, and hold down the cork with your palm while removing the wire hood on the bottle.
- Put a towel over the entire top of the bottle and grasp the cork.
- To break the seal, twist the bottle while holding the cork at a 45-degree angle. As the cork breaks free from the bottle, counter its force by using downward pressure.

More information: Prevent Blindness America has more about [preventing eye injuries](#).

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