

Fireworks displays spark safety concerns

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Doctors share tips for injury-free Fourth of July celebration.

(HealthDay)—Fireworks add sparkle to Independence Day festivities but they need to be handled with care—and by adults, a prominent group of U.S. surgeons says.

"Many people consider consumer fireworks to be harmless fun, when in fact they can be extremely dangerous, especially when used by or near children and adolescents," Boston [orthopedic surgeon](#) Dr. Tamara Rozental, spokesperson for the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, said in an academy news release.

"If caution is not used and [safety guidelines](#) are not adhered to, fireworks can cause serious injuries to the hands and fingers as well as the eyes," Rozental said.

Americans bought more than 212 million pounds of fireworks in 2011, compared with 184 million pounds in 2010, the American Pyrotechnics Association says. In 2012, there were more than 18,700 injuries caused by fireworks, including more than 7,300 emergency department visits, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

The CPSC also says that 36 percent of the estimated emergency department-treated, fireworks-related injuries in 2011 involved people younger than age 20. The parts of the body most often injured by fireworks were hands and fingers (46 percent of injuries); eyes (17 percent); head, face and ears (17 percent); and legs (11 percent). Burns accounted for more than half of the emergency department-treated, fireworks-related injuries. There were 1,100 [emergency department](#)-treated injuries associated with sparklers and 300 with bottle rockets.

The following fireworks safety tips come from the orthopedic surgeons:

- Check with your local police department to determine if fireworks can be discharged legally in your area. If so, determine which types are legal. Never buy or use illegal fireworks. Their quality cannot be assured.
- Only adults should light fireworks. Never hold lighted fireworks with your hand or place them near the body. Read the caution label on fireworks' packaging before lighting them and always wear safety eyewear when using fireworks. Never try to relight a firework.
- Always have water handy in case of a fire, such as a hose hooked to a faucet or a nearby bucket of water. Soak used fireworks in water before discarding.
- If you or anyone else suffers a fireworks-related injury, seek immediate medical attention.
- Never allow young children to play with or go near fireworks, including sparklers. They might seem harmless, but sparklers can

reach temperatures of more than 1,000 degrees.

- Never handle fireworks if you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

More information: The Nemours Foundation offers [fireworks safety tips](#) for parents.

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