

# Have a fun—but safe—fourth of July

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Hands, head, eyes at greatest risk for injury with at-home fireworks, expert says.

(HealthDay)—Your hands, fingers, head and eyes are at greatest risk for injury if you set off fireworks at home, a doctor warns.

"Fireworks are basically explosives and all are capable of causing [severe injuries](#), but even minor injuries can cause significant functional disability when it comes to hand and eye function," Dr. John Santaniello, a trauma surgeon at Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood, Ill., said in a Loyola news release.

"Fireworks are not toys," he added.

Hands and fingers account for the largest number (32 percent) of reported injuries caused by [fireworks](#), according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. The head and eyes account for 19 and 18

percent of reported fireworks-related injuries, respectively.

Along with the physical effects, fireworks-related injuries are costly. One study that used data from several states found that the average cost of a hospital stay related to a fireworks-related amputation of a finger, thumb or lower arm was \$15,600. Total costs for all fireworks-related injuries in the study were \$1.4 million.

Loyola offered these fireworks safety tips:

- The safest way to celebrate Independence Day is to attend a community fireworks display staged by professionals.
- If you decide to have fireworks at home, use only legal ones and read and follow all directions. Never approach a fireworks device after it has been lit, even if it appears to have gone out. It may explode unexpectedly.
- Make sure the area where you have fireworks isn't too dry. Have fire extinguishers and water hoses within easy reach, but always call 911 immediately if a fire starts.
- Give children glow-in-the-dark wands and noisemakers instead of firecrackers and sparklers. Teach children about the dangers of fireworks.
- If someone is injured by fireworks, summon medical help immediately.

**More information:** The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission offers more [fireworks safety tips](#).

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