

# Handle fireworks with care on the fourth

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(HealthDay)—Americans love fireworks, especially on the Fourth of July, but experts warn they can be dangerous if not used safely.

About 10,500 fireworks-related injuries were treated in U.S. hospitals in 2014, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. And nearly 400 people lose sight in one or both eyes every year due to fireworks injuries.

Dr. Priscilla Fowler is an assistant professor in the department of ophthalmology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. "I've seen too many injuries related to fireworks, and many of these occur in children and innocent bystanders, and result in permanent vision loss," Fowler said in a university news release.

And Dr. Jay McCollum, director of emergency services at the university's Eye Hospital, suggested that "it's better to just leave the fireworks alone and go to a show . . . and let the professionals do it. That's the safest thing."

If you do use fireworks at home, the [eye](#) doctors have some safety tips:

- Always have adult supervision and never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Make sure fireworks are legal in your area before using them. Read and follow all manufacturers' warnings and instructions. Shoot fireworks on a clean, flat surface away from the house or flammable materials.
- Keep a source of water close by in case of fire or another mishap. Light fireworks one at a time, then move back quickly. Never try to re-light or pick up fireworks that have not ignited fully.
- Never use bottle rockets and never throw fireworks at another person.

If a [fireworks](#)-related eye injury occurs: seek medical attention immediately; do not rub or rinse your eyes, and do not apply pressure; do

not remove any objects that are stuck in the eye; do not apply ointments or take any blood-thinning pain medications, such as aspirin or ibuprofen.

**More information:** The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has more on [fireworks](#).

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