

A safer July 4th is one without backyard fireworks

July 1 2020



(HealthDay)—If you plan to celebrate Independence Day, you might

want to reconsider setting off fireworks, Prevent Blindness suggests.

There are other, safer ways to mark the United States of America's birthday, according to the nonprofit eye health and safety group. It noted that thousands of Americans are injured by fireworks each year, especially around July 4th.

"There are so many ways for families to celebrate Independence Day safely without using fireworks," said Jeff Todd, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness.

"We urge everyone to avoid fireworks and spend the 4th of July with family and friends, instead of in the [emergency room](#)," he added in a news release from the group.

Over 19 years, there were more than 34,000 firework-related eye injuries seen in U.S. emergency departments, according to a recent study published in the journal *JAMA Ophthalmology*.

Burns were the most frequent type of eye [injury](#) from fireworks. And bottle rockets were a common type of firework that disproportionately caused serious eye injuries.

Children aged 10 to 19 had the highest rates of [fireworks](#)-related injuries treated at emergency departments, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Here are some suggestions on safe ways to celebrate the holiday:

- Decorate 4th of July treats using white frosting, blueberries and raspberries or strawberries.
- Decorate bicycles, scooters and wagons in red, white and blue

and have a family parade.

- Paint flower pots in red, white and blue and plant new seeds or festive flowers.
- Create a patriotic wreath by pasting red, white and blue stars in a circle.

Other ideas: Make paper rockets by using paper towel rolls, [paint](#) or markers, streamers and child-safe glue; make pinwheels or wind socks with an Independence Day theme; or hang decorative string lights and have a dance party with patriotic music. You might even design and decorate [t-shirts](#) and hats using glow in the dark paints or puffy paints with glitter to make them sparkle.

When it's dark: Wrap flashlights in colored cellophane to provide fun shades of light; or buy nontoxic glow-sticks, ropes and jewelry that can safely light the night for kids.

More information: The National Safety Council has more on [fireworks](#).

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Citation: A safer July 4th is one without backyard fireworks (2020, July 1) retrieved 4 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-07-safer-july-4th-backyard-fireworks.html>

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