

Safety Tip of the Month: Finding Out About Fireworks Safety

Isn't the Fourth of July great? In addition to celebrating America's independence as a nation, there's no school, lots of families have barbecues or cookouts and you can usually enjoy a very cool fireworks display once it gets dark.

Many people celebrate the holiday by lighting sparklers or setting off a few fireworks on their neighborhood street while others may go to see a professional fireworks show. It's important to remember that fireworks can be dazzling, but they can also be dangerous - 8,500 people were treated at hospital emergency rooms for fireworks injuries in 1999. And almost half of those injured each year are kids under age 19.

Eye injuries are among the most common fireworks injuries. Many of these eye injuries are very serious and there is even a risk of blindness if eye tissue is damaged or torn! Other common injuries with fireworks include burns to the hands and face, which can leave scars. Someone could even lose one or more fingers if fireworks go off the wrong way. If older kids or teens - or even adults you don't know - are playing with or around fireworks, you should leave the area. No amount of fun is worth the risk of being hurt.

Did you know?

Lots of people don't consider sparklers to be fireworks, but sparklers can actually be as dangerous as rockets and larger fireworks. According to Prevent Blindness America, sparklers can heat up to 1800 degrees Fahrenheit - that's hot enough to melt gold!

To celebrate safely, here are some tips:

1. Kids should NEVER play with matches or fireworks of any kind. It's just too dangerous. If a kid you know is lighting fireworks, leave the area and tell an adult right away.
2. If you are attending a backyard or even a professional fireworks display, be sure you are sitting or standing away from where they are being lit.
3. Only adults should light sparklers for you - and they should always be around if any kids are holding them while they are lit.
4. Always have water or a fire extinguisher handy in case of a fire.
5. Sparklers should only be lit outside - and held carefully away from your face, clothing and hair. You don't want to have your hair or clothes catch on fire - you could get badly burned.
6. Never let your younger brother or sister hold a sparkler without your parent's permission. They may be too young to know they can get burned.
7. Never point your sparkler at another person or throw it.

8. Once the sparkler goes out, soak it in water and then throw it away.
9. And of course, if you or someone you know is injured in any way by a sparkler or firework, get help from an adult right away.

Have a happy and safe holiday!

Source: Kids Health at www.kidshealth.com.