

## Health Watch -- Fireworks

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This Independence Day weekend, leave at least part of your celebration to the professionals.

You may want to grill your own burgers, maybe even have your own little neighborhood parade. But doctors at UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas say you should not have your own fireworks display. Handling fireworks is a good way to damage your eyes.

There are about 11,000 fireworks-related injuries every year, and more than 2,000 of those affect the eyes. Consumer fireworks are responsible for about a third of all eye injuries. [Dr. Preston Blomquist](#), a UT Southwestern ophthalmologist, says he's seen people lose vision and even lose their eyes because of fireworks-related injuries.

Bottle rockets are the most dangerous backyard fireworks when it comes to eye injuries. The rockets fly erratically, so there is really no safe place for spectators to stand. The cans or bottles used to launch the rockets may explode, showering everyone around with metal or glass shards that can cause eye injuries. The rockets themselves may strike the eye directly, causing serious damage.

Fireworks also frequently cause burns. Sparklers may seem like a safe firework for the back yard since you don't launch or shoot them, but they burn at an intense heat that can burn skin or set clothing on fire if the sparkler makes contact.

Instead of doing it yourself, attend a professional fireworks display. The display will be much more spectacular than anything done in your back yard, and you can enjoy it safely.

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