

June 20, 2013

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Optometrists stress eye safety for Fourth of July activities

TOPEKA, KAN. – Each year, we honor Independence Day with a dazzling display of fireworks – whether it be right in our own backyards or at a community celebration. Although most families take precautions to protect themselves and their children against the potential dangers of fireworks, thousands still visit the emergency room every year – often with eye injuries.

According to a special study conducted by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), approximately 9,600 consumers were treated for injuries due to fireworks in emergency rooms during 2011, and 17 percent of those injuries were to the eyes.

To help prevent eye injuries during firework season, the Eye Care Council recommends the following tips to help protect and preserve eyesight during the Fourth of July holiday:

- Discuss firework safety with children and teens prior to the Fourth of July holiday.
- Do not allow kids to handle fireworks and never leave them unsupervised near fireworks.
- Wear protective eyewear when lighting and handling fireworks of any kind.
- Store fireworks, matches and lighters in a secure place where children won't find them.
- Refrain from purchasing sparklers. Heating up to 2,000 degrees or hotter, sparklers are the number one cause of fireworks injuries requiring trips to the emergency room.
- Be aware of your surroundings and only light fireworks when family, friends and children are at a safe distance.

For more information on how to protect your eyes during the Fourth of July and other summer eye safety suggestions appropriate for your vision needs and lifestyle, please contact your Doctor of Optometry or call the Eye Care Council at 1-800-960-EYES.

The Eye Care Council is a special vision health information resource created to better educate the public about vision and appropriate eye care. Participating optometrists contribute time, money and professional advice to help people see more clearly, longer.

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