

# Harms Spotlight on Health

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HOSPITAL DISTRICT

## Have a Blast (Carefully) on the 4th!

Fireworks and celebrations go together, especially this time of year, but fireworks can be dangerous and cause serious injuries if precautions are not used. According to the National Fire Protection Association, 9,800 firework-related injuries were treated in U.S. emergency rooms in 2007 and 92% of those injuries involved fireworks that Federal regulations allow consumers to use, making fireworks the riskiest consumer product on the market.

The most common of these fireworks-related injuries involve children under 14, according to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. While kids are the most likely to get hurt, for parents, this means that you should never leave your chil-



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dren alone with fireworks, even fireworks as seemingly benign as sparklers, which are particularly dangerous for smaller children. Boys in particular are curious creatures and are the most likely to be injured, which is probably not a surprising fact. They

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are generally more adventurous and they like to take risks. The most frequent injuries from fireworks are the hands, eyes, and head or face and more than half of these injuries are burns. The culprits that cause the most injuries are: sparklers (26%), firecrackers (18%), and rockets (15%).

Given all these risks for your family, we hope that if you do choose to use fireworks this 4th, you will remember to use a little common sense and follow these safety tips:

- Read the labels and

follow all warnings and instructions. Most injuries occur due to improper use.

- Have an adult present when using fireworks and never allow children to play with fireworks.
- Light fireworks only on a smooth, flat surface, away from houses and flammable materials.
- If you are lighting fireworks, protect your eyes by wearing safety goggles.
- Stand in a safe place and keep people out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Never re-light a “dud”

firework, wait 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water.

- Never throw or point fireworks at someone.
- Always have water handy- keep a bucket of water or a hose nearby.

I also spoke with our Nurse Practitioner Kris Babb, who after seeing many firework-related injuries through the years in our emergency room, recommends the following, “If you have an accident & get burned the first step is to cool the burn, any way possible. Simple, small burns do well with soap, water, burn ointment, & a bandage. More serious burns & burns to the eyes, head, or neck need to be checked by a provider, as soon as possible.”

The good news is that if

used properly, fireworks can be safe and fun for the holidays. We hope that everyone in our community has a safe Independence Day weekend and avoids any unnecessary trips to our Emergency Room. We recommend that the safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend a professional fireworks display, like the one at the Willow Bay Marina, sponsored by the AF Chamber of Commerce, the effects will be better and much safer.

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