



**News: For Immediate Release**

Additional Information Contact:

Gene M. Ransom, CEO

Office: 410-539-0872 x 3305

**WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT FIREWORKS CAN COST YOU YOUR SIGHT**

*Fireworks injure thousands every year, mostly children and bystanders*

BALTIMORE, July 1, 2024 — Every year, people suffer serious eye injuries from backyard fireworks displays. Most of the victims are children and bystanders located nowhere near the pyrotechnics. As Independence Day nears, MedChi and the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](#) are working to dispel the myths that put people at risk of blindness.

“Most people just don’t see the harm in sparklers, spinners, firecrackers, and bottle rockets, and they learn too late the necessity of wearing eye protection,” said Dianna Seldomridge, M.D., clinical spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. “It’s best to leave fireworks to the professionals. But if you choose to celebrate with fireworks, wear safety goggles and take all the necessary precautions to keep your family safe.”

- **Myth #1: Consumer fireworks are harmless.** Fireworks can cause blinding eye injuries such as chemical and thermal burns, [corneal abrasions](#) or [retinal detachment](#). If you live in a state where consumer fireworks are legal and have plans to use them, wear [eye protection](#).
- **Myth #2: Sparklers are made for kids and aren’t dangerous.** Don’t let their small size fool you; sparklers burn at more than 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. That’s hot enough to melt certain metals.
- **Myth #3: Duds are harmless.** Malfunctioning fireworks should be handled with caution. Do not try to relight faulty fireworks. Instead, soak it in water and throw the dud away.
- **Myth #4: Only those handling the fireworks are at risk.** The majority of firework-related eye injuries happen to [bystanders](#). Watch fireworks from at least 500 feet away and make sure everyone is wearing eye protection.

In general, eye protection should always be worn when outside. “Eye protection that covers the front and sides of your eyes are preferred. These can be purchased at hardware stores or online.” Dr. Mona Kaleem, MSEPS and also an Associate Professor of Ophthalmology at the Wilmer Eye Institute, Johns Hopkins University. If an [eye injury](#) does occur, seek medical attention right away. For more tips and information, visit [www.eyesmart.org](#).

**About MedChi**

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland’s foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit [www.medchi.org](#).

**About the American Academy of Ophthalmology**

The American Academy of Ophthalmology is the world’s largest association of eye physicians and surgeons. A global community of 32,000 medical doctors, we protect sight and empower lives by setting the standards for ophthalmic education and advocating for our patients and the public. We innovate to advance our profession and to ensure the delivery of the highest-quality eye care. Our

EyeSmart® program provides the public with the most trusted information about eye health. For more information, visit [aao.org](http://aao.org).