



NewsWire

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CONTACT: Kay Williams, kay.williams@ttuhsc.edu
(806) 781-8408

Keeping Fourth of July Celebrations Safe

TTUHSC/Texas Tech Physicians Experts Offer Tips to Protect Against Injuries and Health Concerns

In advance of Fourth of July celebrations, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) and Texas Tech Physicians health care experts said there are steps people should take to protect their ears, eyes and skin as they enjoy the nation's birthday.

Fireworks and Hearing Safety

As much as some might enjoy fireworks, the loud popping sounds they produce can contribute to noise-induced hearing loss, the second most common type of inner ear hearing loss after age-related hearing loss. In most cases, noise-induced hearing loss develops gradually and can begin at any age. Though some people can be

People closer to the fireworks, especially those igniting them, should wear earplugs and earmuffs for extra protection.

Fireworks and Eye Safety

Here is a link to the related on-camera interview for media use:

<https://www.ttuhs.edu/communications-marketing/media/video-stories/video/2024/june/celebrate-july-fourth-safely.aspx>

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, fireworks are responsible for an estimated 9,100 emergency room trips annually. Of those injuries, approximately 15% are related to the eyes, and the vast majority of those occur in the weeks immediately before and after July 4. **Kelly Mitchell, M.D.**, an ophthalmologist in the TTUHSC Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences, said approximately 30% of those eye injuries were to children. However, he noted that all of those affected

UVA rays, also known as aging rays, go deeper into the skin and can cause deeper levels of tissue damage, potentially increasing the risk of skin cancer.

To protect the skin from the Independence Day sun and from the evening fireworks show, Tarbox recommended:

Use appropriate sunscreens. Tanning, the body's response to DNA damage from UV radiation, can accelerate the aging process and increase the risk of skin cancer. When selecting a sunscreen, opt for one that works well with your skin and has an SPF of 30 or higher. For those who are sensitive to chemical sunscreens, a physical sunscreen like a titanium- or zinc dioxide-based sunscreen can be beneficial. For people concerned about chemical absorption sunscreens, Tarbox said the best products to use are those made for children and babies. For those concerned about sunscreens that contain benzene, the vast majority of those sunscreen types are sprays and gels, so if you wish to avoid that ingredient, select a different type of sunscreen.