

# HEALTHY Kidz

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **BEAUTIFUL FIREWORKS WITHOUT DANGER**

Fireworks and celebrations go together, especially during the upcoming Independence Day holiday, but fireworks can be dangerous, causing serious burns and eye injuries.

Family outings to East Tennessee Fourth of July celebrations or the September Boomsday can be a great spectacle for children. However, several thousand people are treated in U.S. emergency departments each year for fireworks-related injuries; about half of these are children ages 15 and under.

“We want all children to have the opportunity to enjoy activities such as July 4<sup>th</sup> and local festivals that include fireworks,” said Dr. Lise Christensen, East Tennessee Children’s Hospital Emergency Medical Physician. “Most injuries are preventable with proper supervision, and not allowing children to light or hold fireworks will ensure that no one will have to miss the show because they are on the way to the Emergency Department.”

If your city, unlike Knoxville, allows home fireworks, here are a few safety tips that are recommended by the medical staff at Children’s Hospital and the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

- Never allow children to play with or ignite fireworks.
- Read and follow all warnings and instructions clearly printed on the fireworks.

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- Be sure other people are out of range before lighting fireworks.
- Only light fireworks on smooth, flat surfaces away from houses, dry leaves and other flammable materials.
- Never try to re-light fireworks that have not fully functioned.
- Always use fireworks outside and have a bucket of water and a water hose nearby in case of accidents.
- Never try to make your own fireworks.

Last year, nearly half of the victims were 15 years old or younger and children ages five through nine have the highest rate of fireworks-related injuries. Fireworks-related injuries most frequently involve hands and fingers (23%), eyes (15%), and the head and face (15%). Nearly two-thirds of the injuries are burns; contusions and lacerations were the second most frequent injuries.

“Ninety-five percent of fireworks injuries occur between June 19-July 19,” Christensen said. “The best thing you can do to protect your child is not to use any fireworks at home. Attend public fireworks displays and leave the lighting to the professionals.”

For more information on fireworks safety, visit the Children’s Hospital Web site at [www.etch.com](http://www.etch.com) or contact the Children’s Hospital Community Relations Department at (865) 541-8165.

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*East Tennessee Children's Hospital's vision is **Leading the Way to Healthy Children**. Children's Hospital is a private, independent, not-for-profit pediatric medical center that has served the East Tennessee region for more than 70 years and is certified by the state of Tennessee as a Comprehensive Regional Pediatric Center.*

**Editor’s Note:** Children’s Hospital’s **Healthy Kids** program is a community education initiative of the Community Relations Department. The program serves as an education resource for parents by offering classes, literature and other opportunities for learning how to improve the health and well-being of children. For more information or to sign up for classes, call the **Health Kids** Hotline at (865) 541-8262.