

# Indiana Hand to Shoulder Center

## Celebrate safely with Fireworks this Fourth

*Indiana Hand to Shoulder Center offers tips to avoid injury*

**INDIANAPOLIS** (June 2009) – Celebrating American independence with fireworks can turn a joyful celebration into a painful memory in a flash. Adults and children should exercise caution when lighting fireworks or attending events where non-professionals are igniting the holiday's entertainment.

In 2007, the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated that 9,800 people were treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries related to fireworks and over half the injuries sustained were to children and teenagers.

"The most vulnerable area of the body, that accounts for nearly 40 percent of fireworks injuries, are the hands and upper extremities," says Dr. James C. Creighton, hand surgeon with Indiana Hand to Shoulder Center. "In cases of mishandling fireworks, the force caused by the small explosion can destroy bones and tear muscle tissue, ligaments and nerves."

More than half of fireworks injuries are burns, while contusions and lacerations are the second most frequent injuries.

Stay safe this Fourth of July by following the recommended injury prevention tips from the Indiana Hand to Shoulder Center and Dr. Creighton:

- An adult should always supervise any fireworks activities
- Only buy from reliable sellers
- Never experiment or make your own fireworks
- Always read and follow label directions
- Know the local laws and restrictions on fireworks in your area
- Never allow children under 14 to play with or ignite fireworks
- Keep a bucket of water or garden hose handy in case of an accident
- Never attempt to relight faulty fireworks
- Light fireworks on a smooth, flat surface away from houses, dry leaves and other flammable material
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person
- Do not allow running or horseplay around the area where fireworks are being ignited
- Never carry or store fireworks in your pockets
- Never shoot fireworks in metal or glass containers
- Always wear eye protection
- Never have any portion of your body directly over the fireworks while lighting
- Properly dispose of fireworks by soaking them in water first

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