

Toys with dart-like projectiles fill your child's wish list. Your holiday party to-dos list includes an order for a case of champagne. Gift-giving and merry-making are the mark of December's arrival. Every year however, the holiday season is marred by heightened incidence of blunt force ocular trauma linked to children's play and celebratory occasions. In a fraction of a second, an individual stands no chance of blinking or dodging the path of high-speed projectiles ranging from BBs to corks in highly pressurized bottles. Over a month directed at communal joy, impulsive and reckless behaviors result in all too many eye injuries that can cost individuals their optimal ocular function for the short-term or at worst, for life.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) has designated [December as Safe Toys and Celebrations Month](#). During the year's last merry-making 31 days, it's easy to curbside disciplined practices that protect one's eyesight. Amidst afternoon-long Nerf gun wars or popping champagne corks for New Year's Eve, a range of eyesight-preserving practices can help adults and children alike maintain the joy of the holidays and remain injury-free.

Eye Health Holiday Guide to Giving Children's Gifts

1) Ensure children are supervised when playing with toy shooters. Before allowing children to play with new shooting toys, review with them safety precautions that will prevent eye injuries.

2) Avoid purchasing toys with sharp, protruding, or projectile parts. Blunt force ocular trauma from shooting toys commonly causes corneal abrasions and ocular hyphema (intraocular bleeding). In more severe cases, shooting toys used recklessly can cause retinal detachment and ruptured eyeballs. Parents place their children's eye health at risk in giving them BBs guns, hard and foam pellets shooters, wall darts sets, slingshots and bow/arrows as holiday gifts.

3) For laser toy products, check labels to ensure the device complies with [21 CFR \(the Code of Federal Regulations\) Subchapter J](#).

4) Include the recommended protective eyewear for sporting goods gifts as part of the gift. Safety goggles, polycarbonate lenses and impact-resistant shooting glasses have preserved the eyesight of countless children and adults who play sports that carry risk for eye injuries.

4) Focus on outdoor-inspired gifts, both for children and adults. Snow gear, roller skates/blades, a safety-netted trampoline, binoculars, or the classic bicycle all encourage healthy outdoor play and pose significantly lower risk for eye-related injuries.

5) Think screen-free gifts for kids. Excessive screen time has been associated with eye strain in several studies. Outdoors- and education-focused gifts are an infinitely better choice for a generation of children who consume screen time at increasingly alarming levels.

New Year's Eve & Holiday Parties

Your guests may be laughing away the year's last minutes at 10 til midnight, but it's no time play loose with popping and pouring the champagne. As it leaves the bottle, a champagne cork can shoot up to 50 mph, a speed that shatters glass. The blunt force of a cork striking the eye

can cause ocular hyphema, abrasions and even glaucoma, all of which can cause loss of eyesight if an individual does not seek urgent treatment.

To preserve a safe and celebratory atmosphere as you ring in a New Year, employ these preventive steps when popping open champagne bottles:

1) Chill your champagne to 45 degrees in the fridge or freezer. Gas bubbles constrict in cooler champagne, decreasing the likelihood of an unexpected fast-popping cork in warmer, highly pressurized bottles.

2) Tear off the foil, then remove the wire hood. Grasp the cork with a towel bottle's top. Slowly and firmly twist the bottle, not the cork, continuing until the bottle's pressure pushes the cork out naturally.

3) Always point bottles at a 45-degree angle away from oneself and others. Never shake, rattle or point a champagne bottle being opened toward any individual.

Toy-related injuries account for 226,000 cases of all pediatric ER visits across the U.S. each year. Adults can be just as prone as children to impulsive, careless behaviors during the holiday season. Employing common sense and safety precautions are a surefire approach to keeping the "happy" in holidays this season!

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