Celebrating 4th of July Safely Amid COVID-19

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, more than 10,000 people were treated for fireworks-related injuries in 2019. Of those, an estimated 73 hundred occurred near the 4th of July holiday. Because of the cancelation of many professional fireworks displays amid the COVID-19 pandemic, this number is expected to increase this year.

Medical experts across the country, including OSF HealthCare providers, are advising community members to practice firework safety measures if planning to use fireworks at home celebrations.

SOT

Sunil Arora, M.D, Medical Director, Emergency Medicine, OSF HealthCare

"This year, experts are expecting an increase in firework usage and firework injuries resulting in emergency room visits, and this is because we've all been cooped up the last several month because of COVID and people will want to naturally get out and celebrate for the weekend."

Dr. Sunil Arora is the medical director of emergency medicine at OSF HealthCare Little Company of Mary Medical Center in Evergreen Park, Illinois. While he acknowledges that fireworks are a natural part of July 4th celebrations, he says serious injuries can result when they are not handled by professionals.

SOT

Sunil Arora, M.D, Medical Director, Emergency Medicine, OSF HealthCare

"Fireworks can cause a whole range of injuries – starting from simple burns to the hands to burns to the rest of the body. Some require surgery and require cosmetic repair or serious ongoing problems and this is why I would recommend not using fireworks at home because the injuries are unpredictable."

If an injury does occur over the holiday weekend from firework use, it is important to have a medical professional evaluate the wound for tissue damage, infection, and more. Whether it is a simple burn or something that may require surgery, OSF HealthCare encourages community members to utilize the nearest emergency department for these injuries.

OSF HealthCare has been taking extra measures during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that emergency departments across the Ministry are safe.

SOT

Sunil Arora, M.D, Medical Director, Emergency Medicine, OSF HealthCare

"With the holiday weekend, there might be situations that arise related to fireworks or unrelated to fireworks that might require someone needing to come to the emergency room, and I would like everyone to feel comfortable coming to the emergency room to get care. We've spent a lot of time and effort into making our environment safe. Staff is using masks. We're using private rooms. We're trying to separate patients if they have respiratory complaints."

Dr. Arora says it's equally important to keep your guard up when it comes to protecting yourself and your loved ones against the COVID-19 virus no matter where you celebrate.

If you or a loved one experiences a medical emergency over the 4th of July holiday, the fastest and safest way to get the care you need is by calling 911. For more information on COVID-19, including frequently asked questions, please visit the OSF HealthCare COVID-19 digital health hub at www.osfhealthcare.org/covid19/.