



4th of July Safety Tips

Last year, the Nebraska Poison Center received 479 calls on glow sticks. A large percentage of these calls occurred around the 4th of July. Glow sticks are soft and pliable making them attractive to small children to chew on. They can be easily broken open. The glow sticks contain a liquid called dibutyl phthalate which has a very strong chemical taste and odor and can cause irritation to the mouth. Concerned parents often call because their child's mouth is glowing or they have gotten the product in their eyes.

In 2011, poison centers across the country received more than 1,700 calls about exposures to fireworks and explosives. Of those, more than 1,400 involved children younger than 6. Fireworks contain chemicals such as potassium nitrate, white phosphorus, barium chlorate and arsenic. They are in packages that are bright and attractive to small children. If swallowed the chemicals in fireworks can make them sick.

The Poison Center offers these tips to make your holiday a happy and safe one.

- Glow sticks shouldn't be repeatedly bent or chewed. Children under the age of three and pets should not be allowed to play with these products.
- Never puncture or cut a glow stick. The liquid in glow sticks can stain furniture, carpet and clothing.
- If children get some of the liquid in their mouth or eyes there is no need to run to an emergency room. Call the Poison Center and the specialist will tell you what you need to do.
- Firework displays are no fun for pets and they should be a safe distance away.
- Sparklers are the fireworks that cause the most injury. If used, there should always be close adult supervision.

The Nebraska Poison Center is free to the public and is staffed by nurses and physician assistant specialists 24/7, to answer all of your poisoning questions. Before going to an emergency room – call the poison center first. You will be glad that you did.