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HOLIDAY SEASON EYE OPENING SAFETY TIPS

New York, NY November 2002– The Holiday Season can be fun, but it can also be hazardous for the eyes. By paying attention to these great eye safety tips provided by Dr. Silverman, many can avoid serious accidents and have a happy holiday season.



Decorating your home for the holiday season can bring joy and satisfaction when you keep safety in mind. While decorating the Christmas tree with children in mind, don't put ornaments that are breakable, have small detachable parts, metal hooks or look like food or candy on the lower branches where small children can reach them. Also, cut back the lower branches to avoid eye injuries to small children. Wearing gloves while decorating with "angel hair" can also help to avoid eye injuries. "Angel hair" is made from spun glass similar to fiberglass and can cause major irritation if particles are rubbed into the eye. Spray Snow is also very dangerous to the eyes. The substance is made up of wax and other chemicals. Avoid spraying the aerosol near the eyes, follow the directions carefully, and apply properly in ventilated areas.



New Year's Eve is notoriously one of the worst times of the year for eye injuries due to the fact that many people do not know how to correctly open a champagne bottle. When a bottle is opened improperly, the cork is propelled at a high velocity by the gas pressure in the bottle. If the cork accidentally strikes the eye, it can lead to serious injuries including internal hemorrhage, traumatic cataract, and torn or detached retinas. To avoid turning a happy occasion into a tragedy, follow these common sense rules on how to prevent an injury to you or someone else's eyes:

- Chill the bottle - warm champagne generates more pressure behind the cork
- Do NOT shake the bottle
- With the bottle pointed away from everyone's face, remove the foil seal and wire that keeps the cork in place. Keep one finger on the cork at all times while you remove the wire.
- As soon as the wire is removed, cover the top of the bottle with a towel. Get a good grip on the cork until you feel or hear the release of some gas behind the cork. Then remove the towel with the cork.
- Cheers! Make your toast, enjoy your drink and have a happy and healthy New Year!



- **H**oliday driving often means spending several hours behind the wheel, and after many miles on the road, spotty and blurry vision should be a concern. Long journeys can be tiring and driver fatigue is a serious problem, contributing to 55 fatal crashes last year. Here are ways to avoid fatigue and improve alertness:

- When the eyes begin to feel strained and dry from long hours on the road, artificial tears can help soothe and refresh and contribute to clear vision.
- Get plenty of sleep before your journey, and try to drive at times of the day when you are normally awake.
- Take your time and plan for rest breaks every couple of hours. Get out of your vehicle and take a short walk or do some other exercise to get your blood flowing and improve alertness. If you feel tired, take a short nap (less than 40 minutes).
- If possible, share the driving.
- Don't drink and drive, and don't speed. Many fatigue-related crashes also involve these two factors.
- Use air conditioning if your vehicle has it. Cool air will keep you more alert and will help avoid frustration and stress, which is a major cause of fatigue



he holidays are the worst possible time of year for the car to break down on the highway. Unfortunately, this frequently happens in the winter because the stress of cranking a cold engine with thickened motor oil requires a lot of energy. The towing companies will be busy towing other cars so who knows how long someone might have to wait in the cold when they would rather be celebrating? The first source of help in such a situation is *jump*-starting your car with cables attached to their functional running car and good battery. But most people are not aware that this procedure can be hazardous. Every year, hundreds of injuries result from car batteries that explode while they are being jump-started. An exploding car battery is like a bomb that sprays chunks of plastic casing and sulfuric acid into the face. The most vulnerable part of the body in such an accident are the eyes. The best way to avoid this type of injury is to wear eye protection, and do not lean over the battery. It also very important have a qualified mechanic check your car's brakes, battery, fluid levels, tire pressure, light bulbs, and any parts that need regular maintenance before you leave.

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