

# Eye on Health

## Popping Corks Safely This Holiday Season

(NAPSA)—Just as baseball is associated with hot dogs and Thanksgiving with turkey, New Year's Eve is soaked with champagne. The popping of the cork is almost as much a part of the celebration as the dropping of the ball, if not more so.

Unfortunately, too many celebrants drop the ball on safety and let corks fly, threatening the eyesight of their fellow holiday revelers as well as themselves. Incorrect popping of champagne corks is one of the most common holiday-related eye hazards, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO).

"It's a sobering thought, but many revelers forget that popping the cork on a bottle of champagne is a dangerous activity if done incorrectly," said Andrew Iwach, M.D. "Every year, warm bottles of champagne, coupled with bad cork-removal technique, are responsible for causing serious, blinding injuries."

Healthy bottle-opening tips include:

- Be aware that a recently shaken bottle increases the risk of eye injury.
- Make sure sparkling wine is chilled to at least 45 degrees Fahrenheit before opening. The cork of a warm bottle is more likely to pop unexpectedly.
- Hold down the cork with the palm of your hand while removing the wire hood. Point the bottle away from yourself and others at a 45-degree angle. Place a towel over the entire top and grasp the cork, slowly and firmly twisting it to break the seal. Keep the bottle



**A champagne or other sparkling wine cork shouldn't be popped out violently; it should be gently removed to preserve the wine's effervescence.**

at a 45-degree angle, hold it firmly with one hand and use the other hand to slowly turn the cork with a slight upward pull. Continue until the cork is almost out of the neck.

Counter the force of the cork using slight downward pressure just as the cork breaks free from the bottle.

"By following a few simple safety tips, you can make sure your holidays are festive and injury free," said Dr. Iwach.

*AAO is the world's largest association of eye physicians and surgeons, with more than 27,000 members worldwide. Ophthalmologists, or eye M.D.s, can treat eye diseases and injuries and perform eye surgery. To find an eye M.D., visit the Academy's Web site at [www.aao.org](http://www.aao.org).*