



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Do You See What I See: 3 Vision Health Tips for the Holidays**

*AlwaysCare Benefits, Starmount Life Advocate for Eye Safety and Wellness*

**BATON ROUGE, La.** – December 10, 2015 – For many Americans, the holiday season means viewing decorations, seeing family, and watching brilliant fireworks to begin a new year. Unfortunately, many Americans will also put their vision at risk during this visually festive time of year.

This holiday season Starmount Life Insurance Company and AlwaysCare Benefits, Inc., sister companies and national providers of vision insurance, offer three expert tips for maintaining healthy eyesight.

### **Protect your eyes – at home and away**

For decades, families have celebrated the holidays with elaborate ornaments and decorations throughout their homes. But, holiday decorating should be done with caution. The [U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission \(CPSC\)](#) estimated 15,000 emergency room visits were related to holiday decorating injuries in 2012<sup>1</sup>.

That's why the CPSC urges consumers to use safety precautions, including:

- Protecting eyes with safety eye wear when igniting fireworks or handling Christmas trees
- Avoiding sharp or breakable decorations around children
- Using gloves when working with angel hair or spun glass

Americans traveling to the mountains for the holidays should also remember eye safety. Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the biggest threat to vision health, and intensifies on snowy mountain tops and high altitudes.

Snow can reflect up to 80 percent of the sun's radiation. Although visible rays may be blocked, 80 percent of the sun's UV radiation can still pass through clouds<sup>2</sup>. Sunglasses with 99 percent UV protection are recommended.

**Vision Health for the Holidays**

An estimated 15,000 emergency room visits were related to holiday decorating injuries in 2012.

Use safety precautions when decorating for the holidays.

Snow reflects 80% of the sun's UV radiation. So wear sunglasses!

More than 265,000 emergency room visits were related to toy injuries in 2013.

Buy age-appropriate toys and safety gear for children.

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Sources:

- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission: <http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Newsroom/News-Releases/2014/CPSC-Estimates-More-Than-15000-Holiday-Decorating-Injuries-During-November-and-December>
- The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission via Prevent Blindness America: [www.preventblindness.org/what-you-need-know-about-toy-related-injuries](http://www.preventblindness.org/what-you-need-know-about-toy-related-injuries)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: <http://www.epa.gov/sunsafety>

### Purchase appropriate toys and safety gear

Holiday gifts are highly anticipated by many children. But, consumers need to evaluate the safety aspects of their purchases. More than 265,000 emergency room visits per year are related to toy injuries, according to the [CPSC](#).

When purchasing toys or sporting equipment, buyers need to consider age-appropriate toys, risks for younger siblings, needed safety gear and other [safety information](#).

### Schedule routine vision exams

Individuals with standalone vision insurance are twice as likely to receive vision exams<sup>3</sup>. However, utilization of benefits for annual exams still remains relatively low.

According to a 2010 Vision Care Plans study, only 33 percent of Americans with vision insurance diligently receive annual eye exams. A CDC survey reported that people only seek vision care when a problem exists, or forget about their vision health altogether.

“Vision health directly correlates to overall health and quality of life,” said Deborah Sternberg, President of [Starmount Life](#) and [AlwaysCare Benefits](#). “People are not usually able to identify diminished eyesight without professional care. So, this holiday season make the gift of sight a priority with a proactive approach to maintaining vision health and safety.”

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### About Starmount Life Insurance Company and AlwaysCare Benefits, Inc.:

Starmount Life Insurance Company and sister company, AlwaysCare Benefits, Inc., are both privately owned businesses. Starmount Life and AlwaysCare Benefits are national providers and administrators of innovative life and supplemental insurance products for groups and individuals.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.cpsc.gov/en/Newsroom/News-Releases/2014/CPSC-Estimates-More-Than-15000-Holiday-Decorating-Injuries-During-November-and-December/](http://www.cpsc.gov/en/Newsroom/News-Releases/2014/CPSC-Estimates-More-Than-15000-Holiday-Decorating-Injuries-During-November-and-December/)

<sup>2</sup> [www2.epa.gov/sunsafety](http://www2.epa.gov/sunsafety)

<sup>3</sup> Hellem, Amy. “What Is Vision Insurance?” All About Vision. <http://www.allaboutvision.com/vision-insurance/what-is-it.htm>.