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What to Do After a Dog Bite

Over 800,000 Americans require medical attention for dog bites each year. Dog owners are liable for damages caused by their pets, with the following exceptions: a person trespasses or commits another criminal offense on the owner's property (or attempts to), or teases, torments, or abuses their dog.

Assuming you are an innocent victim, here is what you should do if bitten:

Obtain the names, phone numbers, and addresses of the dog owner and any witnesses. Even if you think you are uninjured, some injuries only crop up a day or two later, and this information will come in handy. Damages caused by a dog may entitle you to compensation for medical bills, lost income, and pain and suffering.

It is imperative that you get the name of the owner. If the dog can't be identified, you may face the possibility of painful rabies treatment.

Seek medical attention immediately when the situation calls for it. Even if a bite doesn't seem all that serious, puncture wounds are susceptible to infection. Maintain records of all doctor and hospital visits, and copies of bills.

If you sustain a wound to the face, request that a plastic surgeon treat it. Emergency-room doctors are skilled at the medical...not so much the cosmetic.

Report the incident to animal-control authorities. This is especially important when an animal's owner is unknown. The authorities will try to track the dog down (and its owner), quarantine it for a rabies evaluation, and talk to witnesses, which can aid a potential claim.

If you have been injured by a dog, contact a dog-bite attorney to protect your rights. •





The Sweet Smell of Toxicity

For some people, the excitement of buying a new car is nearly matched by the thrill of that new car smell. But don't inhale too deeply.

The sweet odor in the cabin is a concoction of toxic chemicals derived from the solvents, rubber, plastic, adhesives, and fabrics used to construct that new set of wheels. Each of these materials contains volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that are released into the air—a process called outgassing. The warmer the temperature, the higher the release rate of VOCs.

For some people, short-term exposure to VOCs can lead to headaches, nausea, eye irritation, or sore throat. Longer range exposure in confined spaces has the potential to cause immune-system disorders and cancer.

Fortunately, VOCs eventually evaporate and outgassing ceases. VOCs are at their peak in the first three months of new car ownership and fade away entirely in two to three years. It's unlikely that a person will suffer the most extreme effects of VOC exposure unless they buy a new vehicle every year.

The United States does not have any air quality laws pertaining to new car smell. However, automakers are working on eliminating dangerous chemicals from the manufacturing process and substituting safer alternatives. Examples include water-based glues and seat foam made from soy.

Good ventilation can counter the toxic nature of VOCs. In the first few months, keep the windows open at least a crack while driving. When it's cold and the windows are shut, allow fresh air into the car rather than recirculating it. To avoid the new car-smell dilemma entirely, purchase a car that's at least two years old instead of a new one. ●

If Earth's Magnetic Poles Flip the Switch....

The earth is surrounded by a magnetic field that projects thousands of miles into space. It protects the earth's surface from the damaging effects of space radiation, including highly charged particles from the sun that would otherwise strip the earth of its atmosphere.

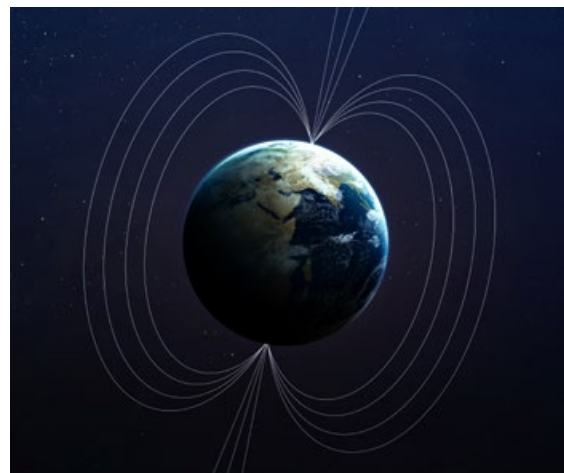
There are two magnetic poles: north (negative polarity) and south (positive polarity). They are constantly shifting due to dynamic activity within the earth's outer, molten core—where the magnetic field is generated.

For the past century, the magnetic field has been weakening, prompting concerns that the magnetic poles could soon flip ("soon" in geologic time can still be thousands of years). This phenomenon occurs roughly every 300,000 years on average. However, the last time it happened was over 780,000 years ago, so we might be overdue.

If the magnetic poles were to flip today, the impact could be profound. When a flip occurs, the magnetic field's strength will be diminished for longer than anyone would like. That means life on earth would be more susceptible to the damaging effects of space radiation until the magnetic field's strength rebounded.

Many scientists speculate that some currently habitable areas of the earth would become uninhabitable. Power grids and communications systems would likely suffer severe interruptions, which could cause mayhem and economic devastation. Animals navigate by innately utilizing the magnetic field. They would be thrown for a loop temporarily but would likely adjust. There has been no indication that past magnetic-pole flips caused extinctions.

A magnetic-pole reversal will inevitably happen. The good news is that we probably have time to develop new technologies and other countermeasures to survive the earth's magnetic personality. ●



Sweet Potato Risotto

If you're looking for something robust but with a hint of sweetness, this recipe is worth trying!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 sweet potato, peeled and cut into ¼-inch dice
- 1/3 c. chopped shallots
- 3 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 Tbsp. melted butter, divided
- 1 Tbsp. minced garlic
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. black pepper, ground
- 1 c. Arborio rice
- ½ c. white wine
- 3 c. vegetable stock
- ½ c. grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 Tbsp. fresh parsley, chopped

DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
- Place diced potato, shallots, garlic, salt, pepper, and **2 Tbsp. of the oil** and **1 Tbsp. of the butter** into a small baking pan. Mix and bake for 10 minutes before flipping the mixture and baking for another 10 minutes.
- Meanwhile, in a medium pot, add the remaining oil and butter. Heat over medium-high. Add rice and cook for about 2-3 minutes, keeping the rice moving. Do not brown the rice. Add wine and stir, then reduce heat to medium-low. When the wine has evaporated, begin adding stock a quarter-cup at a time, waiting until it evaporates before adding more. The rice should never completely dry out.
- Add the sweet potato mixture to the rice once it has completed cooking (you can do this at any point) and continue cooking the rice until the stock has evaporated and rice is cooked (but not mushy). Remove heat and stir in Parmesan and parsley. Cover and let sit for 3-5 minutes until the texture is creamy. Season as desired. •

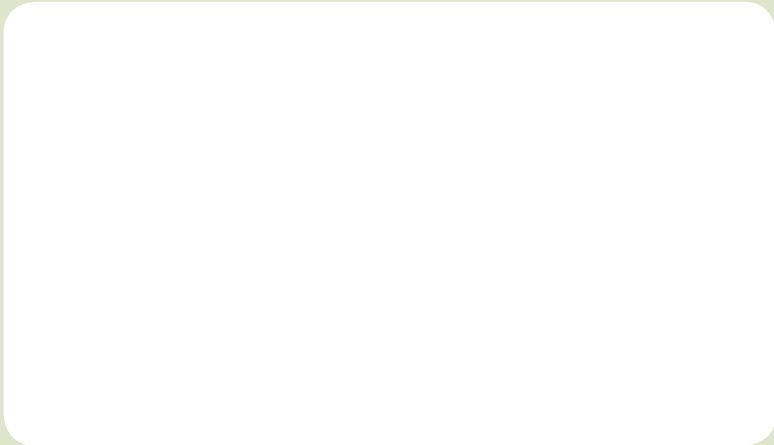


January 2019 Notable Dates

Jan 3 – National Fruitcake Toss Day **Jan 5** – National Bird Day **Jan 8** – National Winter Skin Relief Day
Jan 12 – National Pharmacist Day **Jan 16** – National Nothing Day **Jan 21** – Squirrel Appreciation Day
Jan 28 – National Kazoo Day **Jan 29** – National Puzzle Day



Minimize the
Hazards of Winter
Weather Driving
pg 1



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Social Media Can Ruin Your Personal Injury Case



Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, and other social media platforms have a few things in common: They're fun, easy to use, and can wipe out your personal injury case with one ill-advised post.

Insurance adjusters, investigators, and defense attorneys will try to tear down your case from the get-go. And social media is a treasure trove of comments, photos, and videos that can be twisted and taken out of context to damage your credibility and attack the legitimacy of your injuries.

For instance, you may want to support a friend by attending his/her wedding, despite your current injury. At the reception you raise your arms for all of two seconds as you walk across the dance floor. Frozen in time in a photograph, that one action can make it look like you were busting moves all night.

Many people mistakenly believe their social media posts will be off-limits if their privacy settings are properly configured. Not so. Defense attorneys are frequently able to legally gain access to supposedly private posts, pins, and comments.

Even your Google searches can be used against you. If you look up information on zip-lining, that may be distorted to portray you in a negative light.

Erasing past posts won't do any good. Nothing you post online ever really disappears. Also, family members and friends active on social media could be revealing information about you that can be manipulated. Ask them to refrain from posting anything involving you.

If you have been injured due to someone's negligence, contact a personal injury attorney. It's also wise to stay off social media while a claim is pending. •