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Surgical Errors

All surgeries carry inherent risks to patients who undergo them, but doctor/nurse negligence further complicates their situations. Negligence can occur in “major” or “minor” surgeries, as well as tests/screenings, worsening patients’ health and sometimes resulting in death.

Following is a list of some surgical errors that are more common than they should be:

- **Surgery on the wrong patient.** Miscommunication between health-care professionals, lack of pre-operative verification, and inadequate hospital protocol can lead to the loss of healthy organs and other consequences, not to mention that the original intended surgery still hasn’t been performed.
- **Wrong-side surgery.** Whether a patient has the wrong leg amputated or a healthy kidney removed and the diseased one left untouched, it’s a mistake that should never happen.
- **Foreign objects left in the body.** Sometimes when a patient is “closed up” after surgery, they wind up having more parts inside them than prior to surgery. Sponges, clamps, gauze, pads, and scalpels have on occasion been left behind, inside patients. Extreme pain, serious infection, and death are the obvious potential outcomes. A patient who survives initially will need another surgery to remove the left-behind item.
- **Anesthesia errors.** Too much anesthesia may lead to lack of oxygen, brain damage, and death. Too little might result in a patient waking up in the middle of surgery in excruciating pain.
- **Collateral damage.** While surgery to correct one problem may be successful, other problems are sometimes created. A punctured organ or damaged nerves may lead to lifetime disabilities, chronic pain, and serious infection.

If you’ve been a victim of a surgical error, contact an experienced medical malpractice attorney to fight for your rights for just compensation. •



Technology to Help the Elderly

Many times, high-tech gadgetry is thought to be the domain of the young, but there is an abundance of devices and gadgets to aid the lives of seniors—and give peace of mind to their loved ones.

Connected smart-home devices enable loved ones to monitor an aging parent from far away. Sensors can alert a family member or doctor if something is amiss in an elderly person's daily routine – the person hasn't gotten out of bed, has been in the bathroom for over an hour, medication has been skipped, and so forth. There are even shoes with an implanted GPS chip; if a person in the early stages of dementia wanders beyond a certain perimeter, a caregiver will be alerted.

Smartphone apps afford loved ones the opportunity to control an aging parent's security systems, thermostats, and kitchen electronics from remote locations. There are also biometric gadgets that can monitor a person's blood pressure, blood sugar, heart rate, and cholesterol levels, reducing stressful visits to the doctor's office or hospital.

The field of robotics is advancing quickly, giving seniors more control over their environment and providing assistance for tasks that extend beyond their normal capabilities.

New technology can keep seniors safer, enable them to stay independent longer, and reduce anxiety among other family members. It's not just a young person's world. •



March 2018 Important Dates

March 11 – Daylight Savings Time Begins **March 17** – St. Patrick's Day

March 20 – First Day of Spring **March 25** – Palm Sunday

March 30 – Passover Begins / Good Friday

Did You Hear? Botox, not just for wrinkles anymore

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the popular anti-wrinkle drug Botox for a far different use than what we're accustomed to. It now appears that it can help reduce the frequency of urinary incontinence caused by an overactive bladder.

According to the FDA's clinical studies, injecting Botox into the bladder muscle helped to relax the organ, boost its capacity and cut down on the number of incontinence episodes.

The FDA studies also indicated some side effects from the Botox procedure were possible, including painful urination, urinary tract infections, and incomplete emptying of the bladder.

An estimated 33 million men and women in the U.S. suffer from overactive bladder. •



The Dangers of Indoor Tanning



Indoor tanning—using a tanning bed, booth, or sunlamp—to achieve a “healthy glow” is a fact of life for over 28 million people who visit a tanning salon at least once per year in the United States, 70 percent of whom are young women ages 16–29.

One misguided notion is that indoor tanning is safer than tanning by natural sunlight. Tanning beds emit four times more UVA radiation than sunlight and two times more UVB radiation, although they’re at least operated on a timer. This exposure compounds the radiation also received from the sun.

Tanning, whether by sun or by lamp, is actually a response to injury. The DNA damage to cells caused by tanning can lead to melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer that claimed over 9,000 U.S. lives in 2012. Melanoma risk is increased by 75 percent

when indoor tanning is utilized before age 35, according to the Centers for Disease Control. The chances of developing squamous cell carcinoma and basal cell carcinoma escalate as well.

Cell damage can also weaken the immune system, leaving one more susceptible to various other diseases. Additionally, skin damage can alter skin texture (making it appear leathery), cause premature wrinkling, and damage the delicate structures of the eye.

The FDA reports that indoor tanning spurs over \$5 billion in economic activity in the United States annually. The tanning industry sometimes tries to protect its turf by diverting attention from the dangers of tanning and making unsubstantiated claims.

Knowledge is key in this matter •

Sugar is a Cereal Offense

A study conducted by the Environmental Working Group investigated 84 popular children’s cereals and found that a whopping 56 of them contain more than the recommended maximum amount of sugar.

Product marketing has done an outstanding job of captivating children and convincing parents at the same time that sugary cereals are fun, harmless, and a good way to start the day (after all, they’re “chock-full of vitamins and minerals”; sugar content is conveniently ignored).

Sugar does provide our bodies with energy, but moderation is key (as always). Too much sugar in a child’s diet can lead to childhood obesity, which can eventually result in diabetes, cardiovascular problems, and a host of other conditions.

Studies have also shown that sugar has an addictive quality, stimulating the same brain response as opiates. No wonder so many kids seem to be bouncing off the walls and have difficulty focusing.

Following are the top 10 sugar-loaded cereals (ranked by percent weight in sugar):

1. Kellogg’s Honey Smacks (55.6%)
2. Post Golden Crisp (51.9%)
3. Kellogg’s Froot Loops Marshmallow (48.3%)
4. Quaker Oats Cap’n Crunch OOPS! All Berries (46.9%)
5. Quaker Oats Cap’n Crunch Original (44.4%)
6. Quaker Oh!s (44.4%)
7. Kellogg’s Smorz (43.3%)
8. Kellogg’s Apple Jacks (42.9%)
9. Quaker Oats Cap’n Crunch’s Crunch Berries (42.3%)
10. Kellogg’s Froot Loops Original (41.4%)

Children’s (and adults’) cereals should be taken seriously. Help your child develop good dietary habits early in life; their future health may depend on it. •





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Vehicular Accidents and Spinal Cord Injuries

The spinal cord is the central support for the body's muscular system and relays the messages from the brain to the rest of the body. Any injury to this vital body part can be devastating.

The number one cause of spinal cord injuries, accounting for more than 40 percent, is motor vehicle accidents. High-impact accidents can fracture, dislocate, crush, or compress one or more of the vertebrae of the spinal cord.

When bits of bone tear into the tissue embedded in the spine, the nerves are damaged.

This damage may lead to full or partial paralysis, respiratory difficulty, circulation problems, muscle tone deficiency, problems with bladder or bowel control, poor sexual health, and greatly diminished skin sensation. Chronic muscle and joint pain, as well as depression, may also result.

Sadly, many of these injuries will need to be dealt with every day for the rest of a person's life. Round-the-clock care for a stretch of time – if not permanently – is necessary for some. Surgeries, rehab, and medication may disrupt one's life, too. Everyday activities prior to the accident may now be impossible or greatly complicated.

It goes without saying that immediate and long-term loss of earnings is a distinct possibility. Don't let financial worries exacerbate an already challenging situation. If you are the victim of a spinal cord injury via an auto accident that was the fault of another, contact an experienced auto accident attorney to safeguard your rights. Your attorney can file an injury claim to alleviate your financial concerns and also compensate you for mental and emotional suffering, enabling you to focus on what's most important—your health. ●