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Auto Accidents and Traumatic Brain Injuries

Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) are responsible for the deaths of approximately 50,000 Americans each year and the hospitalizations of roughly 230,000 more. Many more victims go undiagnosed.

Auto accidents are one of the leading causes of TBI. Most TBIs are closed head injuries, which means that trauma sets the brain in motion inside the skull. The brain gets slammed against the interior surface of the skull, resulting in contusions and swelling.

Trauma can also initiate rotational forces that twist and stretch the brain, which can damage axons. Brain neurons send messages via electrical impulses; axons are the carriers of these impulses. When axons are damaged, brain function is diminished.

A condition called diffuse axonal injury (DAI) occurs on a cellular level and leaves blood vessels and major brain structures intact. This type of damage cannot be detected by MRIs or CT scans, making DAI vastly underdiagnosed and undertreated.

Brain injuries are unlike injuries to other parts of the body. They not only have a physical component, they also affect the cognitive and emotional well-being of the victim. Impairments can be temporary or permanent, subtle or catastrophic.

It's important to note that low-impact auto accidents can result in TBI (e.g., concussion due to whiplash), not just high-impact ones. In addition, a person involved in a car crash may feel perfectly normal immediately following the incident; however, TBI symptoms might only present themselves hours, days, or weeks later.

If you have been involved in a car accident caused by the negligence of another driver, schedule a medical evaluation and contact an auto accident attorney to protect your rights. •



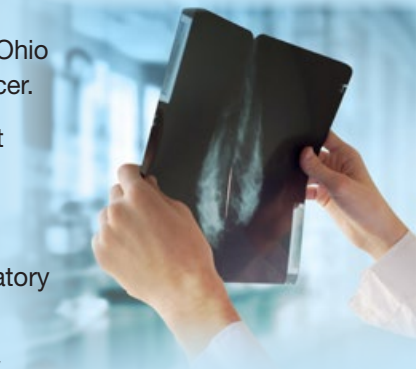
Obesity and Its Link to Breast Cancer

Experts have long known that obesity can elevate the risk of cancer, along with smoking, lack of exercise, poor diet, and excessive alcohol consumption. However, a recent study conducted by the Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center zeroed in on one specific type of cancer: breast cancer.

The study consisted of 121 women with no history of breast cancer. Seventy were undergoing breast reduction, and the remaining 51 were identified as clinically obese. The study results revealed that obesity appears to alter the genes that are part of the body's inflammatory response, hereditary disorders, and other immunological diseases. Fat cells have been known to spark a chronic inflammatory response in the body, an environment in which cancer cells thrive. The body's inflammatory response is beneficial for wound healing, but prolonged inflammation is an invitation to trouble.

Three hundred eight genes were discovered that were connected to the body's obesity/inflammatory response. In obese women, 240 of these genes were more likely to undergo sporadic mutations with low gene expression. (Gene expression is the process that enables a cell to respond to its changing environment.) The other 68 genes were at a decreased risk of gene mutations and had high gene expression.

Eating a healthy diet, exercising, quitting smoking, moderating or eliminating alcohol intake, and in some cases taking baby aspirin are excellent practices to diminish the prospects of breast cancer. A baby aspirin, taken three times a week, has been found to reduce the overall risk of breast cancer by 16 percent, **but don't begin such a regimen without talking it over with your doctor.** •



December 2017 Important Dates

December 7 – Pearl Harbor Remembrance **December 12** – Hanukkah (Start)

December 20 – Hanukkah (End) **December 21** – Winter Solstice

December 25 – Christmas Day **December 26** – Kwanzaa (Start)

Cell Phone Usage and Auto Accidents



Distracted driving has become a serious problem in this country. Driver distractions may be *visual*, taking your eyes off the road; *manual*, taking your hands off the wheel; or *cognitive*, taking your mind off driving. Cell phone usage is a major contributor to distracted driving. Texting has the dubious distinction of involving visual, manual, and cognitive distraction simultaneously.

If you are the victim of another driver's negligence, it may be necessary to file a personal injury claim against the at-fault driver to receive rightful compensation. It may seem a daunting task to prove that a driver was distracted by cell phone usage, but an experienced auto accident attorney can gather the following evidence to prove your case:

- **Witness testimony.** Witnesses to the accident may report that the driver was looking down when the accident occurred (due to texting) or that he/she was talking on a phone.
- **Video evidence.** Cameras are everywhere these days. Many traffic signals, street signs, store fronts, and trucks have them. An attorney can obtain access to potentially valuable evidence.
- **Cell phone records.** This one's a biggie. Cell phone records are admissible as evidence in the courtroom. If the records show the driver was using their phone at the time of the accident, your case is instantly bolstered.

An auto accident attorney can also glean important information from medical records, police reports, and accident reconstruction reports.

Driving is a major endeavor unto itself and deserves our full attention. Lives can be changed dramatically in an instant.

If you've been injured by a distracted driver, contact an auto accident attorney to protect your rights. •

Holiday Craft – Homemade Snow Globes

Almost any jar works for this project: Baby-food, pimiento, and olive jars are good choices. Look for plastic or ceramic figurines (metal ones are prone to rust) at flea markets and hobby or model-railroad shops. Synthetic evergreen tips are available at many floral-supply stores.

MATERIALS

- Synthetic evergreen tips
- Plastic or ceramic figurines
- Glass jar
- Oil-based enamel paint (optional)
- Sandpaper
- Clear-drying epoxy
- Glitter
- Glycerin

STEPS

If the jar lids are not in seasonal colors already, paint them with oil-based enamel paint.

Sand the inside of the lid until the surface is rough. With clear-drying epoxy, adhere the figurine to the inside of the lid, and let the epoxy dry.

Fill the jar almost to the top with distilled water; add a pinch of glitter and a dash of glycerin (available at drugstores) to keep the glitter from falling too quickly. Don't add too much, or the glitter will stick to the bottom of the jar when it's flipped.

Screw on the lid tightly, being careful not to dislodge the figurine. Turn the jar over and back again—and let it snow.

Source: *Martha Stewart Living* – December/January, 1998/1999 •



Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow, Planetary Speaking

In September, the Cassini spacecraft finished up a near 20-year stint of interplanetary travel and fact finding focused on the planet Saturn, along with its moons Titan and Enceladus, and mysterious rings. Its final demise consisted of a purposeful plunge into the planet's upper atmosphere, where it burned and disintegrated.

The international team behind Cassini—NASA, the European Space Agency, and the Italian Space Agency—was saddened by its final blaze of glory, but excited about the wealth of scientific information it provided, including a last-minute transmission of groundbreaking data on the composition of Saturn's atmosphere.

Cassini observed jets of gas and icy particles shooting from Enceladus's south pole that hint at a subsurface ocean, possibly an oasis for life. It also kept tabs on Titan's atmosphere, which rains chemicals down upon the moon's methane and ethane oceans, creating a chemical concoction that may spur life. For these reasons, Cassini was sent into Saturn's atmosphere as its last act. Allowing it to orbit Saturn may have caused an eventual collision with one of these moons, contaminating it with earthly microbial life—which can survive deep space—potentially skewing future missions' findings.

Cassini was also able to monitor a monstrous nine-month meteorological event on Saturn. In addition, it chauffeured the European Space Agency's Huygens probe to Titan, the first touchdown of a spacecraft on a world beyond Mars.

Cassini laid the foundation for future Saturn missions and provided researchers with data and images to keep them busy for decades. Cassini may be gone, but it won't be forgotten...at least by astronomers. •

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pg 1



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Holiday Wishes

At this very special time of year, all of us here would like to wish you and yours a holiday season filled with joy, peace and happiness. Cherish the time spent with family and friends as you create memories that will last a lifetime and may 2018 be your best year yet!

