

CASEY, DEVOTI & BROCKLAND'S

Living Safer

VOLUME 16 • EDITION 2

MAGAZINE



**THE LEADING CAUSE OF
PREVENTABLE DEATHS IN AMERICA**

**How to
Stop Poisoning
in Its Tracks**

CASEY DEVOTI & BROCKLAND

3201 Washington Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63103
314.421.0763
www.caseydevoti.com

Of Counsel:
By Appointment in
Ste. Genevieve, Missouri

PUBLISHERS

Matthew C. Casey
Matthew J. Devoti
Anne Brockland

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-Chief
Judy Chaney
jchaney@livingsafer.com

Art Director
Eva Sumner
esumner@livingsafer.com

Assistant Editor
Louise Flournoy
lflournoy@livingsafer.com

Living Safer

A Letter from the Firm



Matthew C. Casey



Matthew J. Devoti



Anne Brockland

Dear Friends,

We have two exciting announcements for this issue of *Living Safer*.



On May 31, 2024, we relocated our office to the Historic Hill neighborhood of St. Louis. The Hill is a vibrant, culturally rich area known for its deep Italian heritage and close-knit community. Established in the late 19th century by Italian immigrants, The Hill has flourished into a beloved neighborhood, famous for its authentic Italian restaurants, bakeries, and shops.

This historic neighborhood is not only renowned for its culinary delights but also for its notable residents. The Hill is the birthplace of legendary baseball players Yogi Berra and Joe Garagiola, who both grew up playing ball on its streets. The community's strong sense of tradition and pride is evident in its beautifully maintained homes and the many festivals and events that celebrate its unique heritage.

Our new location in this distinguished neighborhood allows us to continue providing exceptional legal services while being part of a vibrant and historic community. We look forward to welcoming you to our new office and continuing to serve you with the same dedication and expertise. Please stop in and say hello if you are ever in the area.

Also in April, we welcomed a new attorney to our team. Alexa Hillery joined us after spending over six years as an Assistant Public Defender in the City of St. Louis. Alexa hit the ground running with us and has already established herself as an integral part of our firm. We are thrilled to have such a skilled and experienced attorney to help serve our clients. For more information about Alexa, please flip to the inside back cover.

Have a fun and safe summer!

Best regards,
Matt, Matt and Anne



**GIVE A RIDE,
CHANGE A LIFE.**



VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED FOR ROAD TO RECOVERY

The American Cancer Society Road To Recovery program gives cancer patients free transportation for cancer-related medical appointments. As a trained volunteer driver, you'll join cancer patients on a crucial part of their journey to recovery, transporting them to and from their appointments and ensuring their access to care isn't prevented or delayed because of lack of transportation.

A few hours of your day could make a lifesaving difference. Connect with us to learn more about Road To Recovery volunteer opportunities in your area.



The American Cancer Society takes your safety seriously and has implemented guidelines to minimize COVID-19 risks to patients and volunteer drivers. All volunteer drivers are strongly encouraged to stay up to date with COVID vaccinations. Masks are currently required.

Road To Recovery is a free program.

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Membership and Unity

We meet throughout the year to reconnect on all matters business and personal.



Good Works, Large & Small

IB members work tirelessly to better their own local communities - through both IB initiatives as well as their own.



A different kind of lawyer

The Injury Board is a national nonprofit group of plaintiffs' law firms that understand the importance and effectiveness of getting out in the community and making a difference. The commonality all IB members share is the drive to succeed, to participate and become part of a select group of like-minded firms.

ARE YOU A TLA LEADER OR BOARD CERTIFIED?
Fill out our online application at injuryboard.org.

ON THE COVER



24 **Preventable Deaths in America** How to Stop Poisoning in Its Tracks

For more than a decade, poisoning has been the leading cause of preventable deaths in the U.S. When you think of someone being poisoned, you may imagine a child getting into household chemicals. However, the driving force of poisoning deaths nationally is drug overdoses. Preventable poisoning may not be what you think, but it can still be stopped in its tracks by public education and monitoring of unsafe substances.

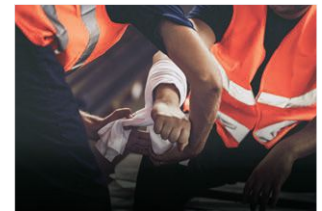
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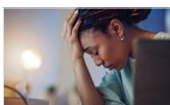
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FOR BABIES**



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Sleep Hygiene 101 Tips for a Restful Night's Sleep

by Brandy Abalos



A good night's sleep is crucial for overall health and well-being. Sleeping well is just as essential for our health as a good diet and regular exercise. It is vital for cognitive function and emotional regulation. Your body repairs itself while you sleep, strengthens your immune system and regulates hormones. By prioritizing sleep hygiene and getting a good night's rest regularly, you're investing in the well-being of your whole body.

What Is Sleep Hygiene?

Sleep hygiene is all about creating habits that promote quality sleep. Sleep hygiene refers to a set of practices and habits that promote good sleep quality. It encompasses both your sleep environment and your daily routines. By following good sleep hygiene, you can condition your body and mind to fall asleep easily, stay asleep throughout the night and wake up feeling refreshed.

A Consistent Sleep Schedule is Important

Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day, even on weekends. This regulates your body's natural sleep-wake cycle (circadian rhythm). This internal clock governs various bodily functions, including sleepiness and alertness.

When you go to bed and wake up at consistent times each day, your body anticipates these patterns. This helps regulate the production of melatonin, a hormone that signals sleepiness. With a predictable melatonin release, falling asleep becomes easier and faster.

Develop a Relaxation Routine at Bedtime

The daily grind can leave us feeling stressed and wound up. A relaxing bedtime routine helps ease these tensions. Activities like reading, taking a warm bath, or light stretching can lower stress hormones and calm your nervous system, making it easier to drift off.

If you struggle to fall asleep, your mind can easily spiral into negative thoughts about not being able to sleep. A relaxing routine can distract you from these worries and create a positive association with bedtime.

Create an Environment Conducive to Sleep

Your bedroom environment significantly impacts your sleep quality. Certain environmental factors like light, temperature and noise can disrupt your body's natural sleep-wake cycle. A sleep-conducive environment minimizes these disruptions, allowing your body to progress through its natural sleep stages uninterrupted. This leads to deeper sleep and better overall sleep quality.

Your bedroom should be a haven for relaxation. It should be cool, dark and comfortable. A cozy mattress, pillows and proper bedding all contribute to a good night's sleep. By creating a comfortable sleep environment, you'll be more likely to fall asleep quickly and stay asleep comfortably.

Avoid Heavy Meals, Caffeine and Alcohol Close to Bedtime

Certain substances like caffeine and alcohol can disrupt your body's natural sleep-wake cycle (circadian rhythm). Caffeine is a stimulant that can block the effects of adenosine, a chemical that promotes sleepiness. Alcohol might initially make you feel drowsy,

but it disrupts sleep later in the night, leading to fragmented sleep and frequent awakenings.

A heavy meal right before bed can take a toll on your digestive system. Your body will be working hard to digest the food instead of focusing on sleep. This can lead to discomfort, heartburn and difficulty falling asleep.

Unplug from Electronics an Hour Before Bedtime

Electronic devices like smartphones, laptops and tablets emit blue light. This specific wavelength of light suppresses the production of melatonin, a hormone crucial for regulating your sleep-wake cycle. Melatonin production naturally increases in the evening to make you feel sleepy. By suppressing melatonin, blue light exposure from electronics can trick your body into thinking it's still daytime, making it harder to fall asleep and stay asleep throughout the night.

The content you consume on electronics can be stimulating. Social media feeds, exciting games, or even work emails can activate your brain and make it harder to wind down. The bright screens and constant notifications can also be distracting, keeping you engaged and alert when you should be relaxing for sleep.

Manage Your Stress to Get Better Sleep

Stress and sleep have a complex relationship. Chronic stress can wreak havoc on your ability to fall asleep and stay asleep, while poor sleep quality can worsen stress levels. You should work to identify your stressors and engage in relaxation techniques before bedtime.

Relaxation techniques like meditation, deep breathing exercises or progressive muscle relaxation can significantly reduce stress and anxiety. These practices help calm your mind and body, preparing you for sleep.

Get a Restful Night's Sleep with Good Sleep Hygiene

Sleep is essential for overall health and well-being. Just like you take care of your physical health by eating nutritious foods and exercising regularly, you also need to take care of your sleep health. By following good sleep hygiene, you can condition your body and mind to fall asleep easily, stay asleep throughout the night and wake up feeling refreshed. [IS](#)





The Art of Setting Boundaries: Protecting Your Mental Health and Happiness

by Cheryl Pope

I wish:

- » I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.
- » I hadn't worked so hard.
- » I'd had the courage to express my feelings.
- » I had stayed in touch with my friends.
- » I had let myself be happier.

These were the most common regrets people expressed to Bronnie Ware, a palliative care worker in Australia who tended to the needs of the dying. Her discussions were so impactful that she wrote a book about her experiences called "The Top Five Regrets of the Dying" to help shine a light on the importance of addressing these issues while there is still time.

Research shows that connection with others can be just as important to physical and mental health as exercise and healthy eating. Sadly, most people aren't great at setting boundaries, which can deprive one of a sense of balance, happiness and connection to others, resulting in regrets.

Brene Brown is a professor and author who has focused her work on understanding vulnerability, trust and leadership. This includes interviewing people on these and related topics.

Not surprisingly, when she asked people why they hesitated to set boundaries, the top reason was, "I don't want to make people mad, disappoint others or make them stop liking me." The second reason was, "I don't know how to set boundaries without sounding selfish or unlikeable."



Interestingly, Brown also discovered that the most compassionate people set the most boundaries. In her book "Atlas of the Heart," she writes, "Boundaries are a prerequisite for compassion and empathy. We can't connect with someone unless we're clear about where we end and they begin."

People often feel the need to apologize or justify when setting a boundary. They don't. Likewise, it's not the job of others to make someone feel better or more comfortable when setting a boundary.

Boundaries simply state what is and is not okay. This is one of the truest versions of self-care and helps ensure that the right things are focused on in the right way.

The key is HOW the boundaries are set. Be clear, respectful and open to questions. Most of the time, people will be thankful for the clarity and appreciate the rarity of seeing someone ask for what they need.

Tips for Setting Boundaries

- » **Get comfortable knowing that everyone can't be pleased.**
- » **Understand and learn from your reaction when someone sets boundaries with you.**
 - Chances are it doesn't end the relationship, and doing the same with someone else won't end the relationship either.
- » **Think about the context of a request before deciding if it is something you can take on. Ask:**
 - Is it something that will benefit me and/or the relationship?
 - Does it require my skills, or can anybody do it?
 - Is it something that won't interrupt other priorities?
- » **Offer another approach:**
 - Offer to help without necessarily providing advice or feedback unless requested.
 - Offer to teach but don't offer to do. Show them how to do something so they can do it themselves in the future.
- » **Recommend someone else. This might just be the opportunity someone else needs to develop new skills.**
- » **Don't apologize for saying no.**
- » **HOW you say something is just as important as WHAT you are saying. For example:**
 - *It sounds interesting, but taking it on would mean that I wouldn't complete XX, so I'm unable to give it the attention it deserves.*
 - *Thank you for thinking about me for this. I wish I could help, but unfortunately, I have to decline this time.*
- » **Give the answer that is best for you.**

People who set boundaries gain respect by showing others their time is valuable and allowing themselves to have healthier, more meaningful relationships. What is the best part of setting boundaries? Saying no to some things means saying YES to others! [IS](#)



Unlocking the Power of Positive Affirmations: Techniques for Self-Improvement

by Lola Davis

Positive affirmations can be a powerful tool for self-improvement, helping you cultivate a more optimistic outlook and build confidence. With creative affirmations, you can unlock your own potential. They can improve a bad day and set you up for success. There are several techniques you can use to develop positive affirmations that unlock your personal powers.

Make Them Personal and Meaningful

Generic affirmations might sound good, but those that resonate with your specific goals and challenges will hold more weight. Identify areas you want to improve, whether it be self-belief, resilience or public speaking.

Use Present Tense to Frame Them

Frame your affirmations as if they're already true. Instead of "I will be confident," say, "I am confident." This strengthens the belief that you possess the qualities you desire. When you say "I am confident," it feels more like a declaration of an existing state rather than a wish for the future. This repetition in the present tense helps your subconscious mind accept the affirmation as true. Over time, this can lead to a stronger belief in yourself and your capabilities.

Embrace Ownership of Your Statements

Use strong "I" statements to take ownership of your affirmations. This personalizes the message and makes it more impactful. "I" statements take ownership of the affirmation and the qualities you're trying to cultivate. When you say, "I am confident," it feels like a personal declaration of your own strength rather than someone else bestowing that quality upon you. This ownership fosters a stronger sense of agency and self-belief.

Develop Strong Positive Affirmations

Use empowering words that uplift and motivate you. Avoid negativity and focus on the positive aspects you want to develop. Steer clear of negativity and self-doubt. Instead of "I won't be afraid of public speaking," focus on the positive outcome: "I am a capable and confident public speaker."

Identify Your Target Goal

Before crafting affirmations, pinpoint an aspect of yourself you'd like to strengthen. Do you crave more confidence? Want to boost your resilience? Perhaps you desire improved focus during work. Recognizing your specific target will guide you in creating relevant affirmations.

Be Specific but Not Restrictive

While you want your affirmations to be concise, avoid being overly generic. Instead of "I am strong," tailor it to the specific kind of strength you desire. Maybe it's "I am strong enough to overcome this obstacle" or "I possess the inner strength to achieve my goals."

Keep It Believable

Keeping your positive affirmations believable boils down to two main strategies: grounding them in reality and creating an environment for success. Break down your larger goals into smaller, achievable milestones. Instead of "I will write a novel this year," identify smaller steps like "I will write 500 words three times a week." Completing these steps feels realistic and provides a sense of accomplishment.

Start Small and Celebrate Progress

Don't jump straight to affirmations about being the world's best at something. Begin with smaller, achievable goals that reflect your current abilities. "I will complete one focused task today" is more believable than "I will be the most productive person in the office." Celebrate these small wins to build momentum and reinforce the truth of your affirmations.

Pair Affirmations with Action

Positive self-talk is powerful, but it's not magic. Take concrete steps toward your goals alongside your affirmations. If your affirmation is "I am a capable public speaker," join a Toastmasters club to practice your skills.

Visualize Your Success

Spend a few minutes each day visualizing yourself achieving your goals. Imagine yourself delivering a confident presentation or overcoming a challenge. This mental rehearsal strengthens the belief behind your affirmations.

Surround Yourself with Positivity

The people you spend time with can significantly impact your mindset. Seek out supportive individuals who believe in you and encourage your growth. Limit exposure to negativity that can undermine your affirmations.

Focus on Progress, Not Perfection

Everyone makes mistakes. When setbacks occur, acknowledge them and refocus on the progress you've made. Instead of "I never make mistakes," try "I learn from my mistakes and become stronger."

Connect Affirmations to Your Values

Align your affirmations with your core values. If integrity is important to you, an affirmation like "I am honest and trustworthy" feels grounded. Disconnected affirmations will feel hollow.

Positive Affirmations Can Lead to Your Self-Improvement

Remember, building self-belief is a journey. There will be days when your affirmations feel less believable. That's okay. Be patient, acknowledge your progress and recommit to using your affirmations as tools for self-improvement. Over time, with consistent effort, you'll find your affirmations becoming more and more believable, fostering a positive mindset that fuels your success. [IS](#)



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Workplace Safety: Creating a Secure Environment

by Lola Davis

Creating a safe workplace requires a combination of hazard elimination and personnel training. Physical safety and environmental security should be placed at the top of the list of importance for employers.

Exploring Workplace Injury Trends

Each year, more than 4.5 million people seek medical treatment for workplace injuries, according to the National Safety Council. Sadly, there are more than 4,500 preventable work deaths each year as well.

In 2021 and 2022, the most common cause of workplace injuries was overexertion and bodily reaction, with 1,001,440 cases. This encompasses non-impact injuries resulting from excessive physical effort such as lifting, pushing, turning, holding, carrying or throwing. It also includes repetitive motion injuries, such as microtasks, resulting in stress or strain on some part of the body.

Slips, trips and falls were the second most common cause of workplace injury, with 674,100 cases, and exposure to harmful substances or environments was the third, with 658,240 cases. These top three causes accounted for more than 75% of all nonfatal workplace injuries that involved days away from work.

How to Create a Safe Workplace Environment

Employers should continuously monitor and improve safety practices for workers. It is possible to create a safe workplace

environment for employees by complying with specific regulations and industry standards, in addition to educating employees.

Eliminate Hazards

Creating a workplace free of hazards is vital. The most important reason is to protect employees from physical and emotional harm. Injuries and illnesses can have devastating consequences, causing pain, suffering, lost wages and even death. By eliminating hazards, risks are significantly reduced and a healthier work environment is created.

Many industries must comply with regulations established by agencies like the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which mandates that employers provide a safe workplace. Failing to comply with those regulations can result in hefty fines and penalties.

Provide Comprehensive Safety Training

When equipped with the knowledge and skills to identify hazards, follow safe work practices and use personal protective equipment (PPE) properly, employees are less likely to get hurt. This translates to fewer lost workdays, reduced medical expenses and lower workers' compensation claims, saving businesses money in the long run.

Comprehensive training empowers employees to understand the "why" behind safety protocols. They gain a deeper awareness of potential hazards specific to their roles and the workplace as



a whole. This fosters a sense of responsibility and a proactive approach to safety, leading to a safer work environment for everyone.

Implement Safe Work Practices

Safe work practices are the cornerstone of a healthy and successful workplace. Accidents and injuries can have devastating consequences, causing pain, suffering and lost wages. Safe work practices significantly reduce these risks by outlining proper procedures and minimizing exposure to hazards.

Following safe work practices can improve efficiency and productivity. When employees aren't worried about getting hurt, they can focus on their tasks and complete them more effectively. Additionally, fewer accidents mean less disruption and downtime.

Provide Proper PPE

Providing proper personal protective equipment (PPE) to employees is a vital part of a comprehensive safety program. PPE serves as the final line of defense against workplace hazards. While engineering controls and safe work practices are ideal for minimizing risk, there will always be situations where some level of exposure is unavoidable. PPE steps in to protect employees from these residual hazards, safeguarding their health and well-being.

Proper PPE, like safety glasses, gloves, respirators or hard hats, can significantly reduce the severity or prevent work-related

injuries and illnesses. For instance, respirators protect workers from inhaling harmful dust or fumes, while safety glasses shield their eyes from flying debris.

Promote a Culture of Safety

A culture of safety in the workplace goes beyond simply following rules and regulations. It's a shared mindset where everyone prioritizes safety and takes responsibility for preventing accidents and injuries. When safety is a core value, employees are more vigilant, report hazards proactively and follow safe work practices. This translates to fewer accidents, leading to a healthier workforce and lower costs associated with injuries.

When employees are focused on their tasks and not worried about getting hurt, they can be more productive and efficient. Fewer accidents also mean less disruption and downtime in the workplace.

Create a Safer Workplace with a Secure Environment

There are many factors that contribute to a safe workplace. These involve eliminating hazards through identification and control, providing essential safety training to employees, developing safe work practices, complying with safety regulations, ensuring employees have proper PPE and promoting a culture that values safety. By taking these steps, employers and employees can avoid most preventable workplace injuries. [IS](#)



Safety Precautions for Outdoor Activities and Adventures

by Brandy Abalos

Spending time outdoors is a fantastic way to relax, have fun and get some exercise. But before you head out on your next adventure, it's important to take some precautions to ensure your safety. The outdoors can be unpredictable, and accidents happen. You can minimize your exposure to risks to protect yourself.

Plan Ahead for the Outdoors

You can plan ahead by researching potential hazards at your destination, like dangerous terrain, wildlife encounters or even fluctuating weather patterns. This allows you to pack the necessary gear and clothing to navigate these challenges safely. Imagine getting caught in a downpour without rain gear or encountering unexpected obstacles on a hike without proper footwear. Planning mitigates these risks.

Maximize Enjoyment by Knowing What to Expect

Knowing what to expect regarding the environment, distance and difficulty level allows you to choose the right activity for your skill set and fitness level. This ensures you're not pushing yourself beyond your limits and can instead have a fun and enjoyable experience. Packing the right supplies, like snacks and entertainment for long hikes, also keeps you comfortable and prevents unnecessary disruptions.

Dress for the Conditions

The right clothing protects you from the elements and keeps you comfortable throughout your adventure. For example, wearing layers allows you to adjust to changing temperatures. Being cold or wet can quickly lead to hypothermia, while overheating can cause dehydration and fatigue. Proper clothing safeguards you from these dangers and lets you focus on enjoying the activity.

Wear Clothing Appropriate for Your Activity

Functional clothing designed for specific activities allows you to move freely and perform at your best. Hiking boots provide ankle support on uneven terrain, while moisture-wicking fabrics keep you dry during strenuous exercise. Wearing ill-suited clothing can restrict movement, cause chafing and hinder your overall enjoyment of the activity.

Pack Your Gear Carefully

Pack the essentials first, like clothing, shelter (if necessary), food, water and a first-aid kit. Once these necessities are accounted for,

you can add activity-specific gear and any comfort items. Packing cubes, stuff sacks and compression sacks help compartmentalize your gear, maximizing space and making it easier to find what you need. Place heavier objects closer to your back for better weight distribution and balance. Lighter items, like sleeping bags or puffy jackets, can fill in empty spaces. By following these packing principles, you can ensure your outdoor adventure is well-organized, comfortable and enjoyable.

Prepare for Potential Accidents

Even with the most cautious approach, unexpected situations can arise. Being prepared for potential accidents minimizes panic and allows you to react effectively. Preparation helps you deal with minor injuries or emergencies efficiently, preventing them from escalating into more serious situations.

Pack a kit with basic medications, as well as supplies to treat minor cuts, scrapes, blisters and insect bites. Consider taking a first-aid course to learn how to use the kit effectively. Bring a fully charged phone or a personal locator beacon (PLB) if venturing into remote areas with limited cell service. Knowing how to use these devices can be crucial in summoning help during emergencies.

Use the Buddy System

"There's safety in numbers." Having a buddy allows you to keep an eye on each other, especially in unfamiliar territory or during challenging activities. They can help you avoid hazards, spot potential dangers you might miss and provide assistance if you get injured or lost.

Two sets of eyes are better than one. Your buddy can help you stay alert and aware of your surroundings, which can be crucial for avoiding accidents or wildlife encounters. They can also remind you to stay hydrated, take breaks and adjust to changing weather conditions.

Stay Safe When Engaging in Outdoor Activities and Adventures

By taking precautions, you're not just protecting yourself but also those adventuring with you and the natural world around you. It allows you to relax, focus on having fun and create lasting memories of your outdoor adventures.

Planning and preparation are the foundation for a safe, enjoyable and respectful outdoor adventure. By taking the time to plan ahead, you're setting yourself up for a successful and memorable experience. [IS](#)



Understanding Emotional Intelligence and Its Impact on Success

by Paul Miller



Over the years, I've realized that my emotions at work directly affect my ability to perform at my best and interact effectively with my team and others in the firm.

Therefore, to create healthy and productive work

environments, we all must understand what emotional intelligence is in the first place. The Harvard Business Journal defines emotional intelligence as "an individual's ability to accurately recognize, understand and manage their own

emotions as well as that of others.” This means that emotionally intelligent individuals are good at reading into people’s emotions and choosing an appropriate reaction.

Emotional intelligence has the strongest impact on performance compared to 33 other workplace skills. Recent research shows that it influences 58% of success across all job types.

Reflecting on over 25 years of practicing law, it is clear that learning about emotional intelligence significantly enhanced my ability to attract work, complete tasks and interact effectively with colleagues at my firm. However, the journey to learning this part of oneself does not happen overnight.

We come out of law school prepared for very little of what really happens on a day-to-day basis in a busy litigation practice. The stress of learning as much as possible and as quickly as possible can be overwhelming for young lawyers. It is likely many of us have dealt with what has become known as imposter syndrome. Little did we know that many others shared our fear of not belonging in the practice of law, thinking the opposing counsel at a deposition, motion or trial was far more qualified. It is impossible to quantify the impact this had on initial success.



The ability to understand one’s emotional intelligence begins with self-awareness. To be self-aware means you have a clear understanding of your emotions, strengths and shortcomings. This means you’ll find it easier to own up to your mistakes and admit it when you don’t know something. It’s also easier to process how a certain situation makes you feel.

When we began, we were nervous, scared, perhaps a bit panicked, and maybe even anxious about drafting a mediation brief, a motion record or any document that would be reviewed by someone more senior than us. As senior members of our firms, we can support younger associates by alleviating the stress and anxiety they may experience in the early stages of their careers. If we want the best work product, then it is incumbent to communicate to associates that we have all been there before. Encourage them to ask for help. Emphasize the importance of asking questions and that it is not a reflection of poor skills on the part of the associates. If we, as mentors, truly mentor and build everyone up rather than tearing them down,

the final product will be much better.

“By having a clear understanding of your shortcomings, you also make an effort to work towards improvement. Those improvements may then result in higher chances of success on a personal and professional level.”

This quote applies to everyone in our firms. Everyone has their strengths and weaknesses. The best coaches in sports put their players in the best position to succeed. That is not to say we ignore shortcomings and don’t work on skills that need improvement, but we will build confidence in ourselves and firm members by placing them in positions that they feel most comfortable.

Self-regulation is arguably the most important aspect of emotional intelligence translating into success. “Self-regulation is having a clear understanding of your emotions.” Instead of reacting to every feeling, take a breath. Go for a walk and avoid catastrophizing. “Once you are out of this stage of anxiety and stress, you can effectively control your words and actions, helping you make calculated moves instead of impulse decisions.” I have never met anyone, including myself, who can maintain common sense, structured thoughts and high-quality work when unable to self-regulate their emotions.

Leaders in the office must take the steps required to decrease the outside noise that can deter them from achieving maximum production. When employees have emotionally intelligent managers, there is greater engagement from staff and greater productivity. The days of criticizing and berating young lawyers for mistakes are long gone if we want greatness to be achieved. It is critical to stop focusing on the negatives of past performance and start creating an environment whereby mentors guide how to improve one’s performance. Always start with one to two positive statements followed by suggestions to improve the final product.

How can this be achieved? First, we, as mentors, need to evaluate our own emotional intelligence. Attending a session regarding leadership and emotional intelligence or getting a coach is a great step in the right direction. It is critical to gain the confidence and trust of your team of lawyers and staff. Here are some ideas for improving your team’s emotional intelligence:

- » Enrolling staff in emotional intelligence training, mindfulness and stress management courses.
- » Setting up team building exercises to get to know each other (it is especially critical post-pandemic if you’re still in a hybrid work model).
- » Encouraging a culture of open communication with regular opportunities for employees to voice how they feel and offer feedback.

The workplace is a happier and more productive place when leaders understand that emotional intelligence is a critical aspect of life in the 2024 workplace. The more we all understand emotional intelligence, the more effective we will all be in achieving the same goal. [L](#)



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The Emotional and Psychological Impact of Personal Injury: Coping and Seeking Support

by Guy D'Andrea



“

We don't get over or move on from trauma. We are forced to make space for it. We carry it. We learn to live with it. And, sometimes, we thrive in spite of it.

– Unknown

A traumatic event can leave a lasting impact. The survivor is often left dealing with physical pain and mental scars. Sometimes, the road to recovery can be just as daunting, whether it's years of physical therapy, emotional support or adapting to unintentional lifestyle changes due to the injury. The quote above suggests while survivors of personal injury are forced to carry their pain, pathways of support exist, and many are necessary to ensure the person has the tools they need to overcome their tragedy.

When a traumatic event occurs, don't hesitate. Your health should be your top priority. Seek help immediately, even if your injury appears to be minor. While physical injuries can be visceral, mental trauma can be just as damaging. Many survivors develop post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression. Nearly eight people out of every 100 people will experience PTSD at some point in their lives, according to the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Talking with a mental health professional is a necessary step in healing the mind after a traumatic event.

Various strategies exist for coping with injury. Self-care is a critical part of recovery following any traumatic event. Mental health professionals often advise keeping a journal or writing down emotions. This allows the survivor to find clarity from within, safely and privately. Support groups can offer survivors a chance to meet others who have suffered similar injuries. Allowing oneself to return to a community atmosphere will provide the necessary relationships and support to accept change.

There can be a stigma related to seeking mental help. Some struggle to relive the event or face an uncertain future because

of the impact of the injury on their lifestyle. Others may have misconceptions due to stereotypes or cultural prejudices about mental illness. Social psychologists and national non-profits are working to change this narrative, putting a focus on the importance of mental health in the hopes of changing the impact of stigma so more people in need feel empowered to seek help. The other challenge survivors may face is overcoming solitude. Their injury could have disrupted relationships, whether it be with their spouse or loved ones. Taking the time to grieve such a loss is essential. Healthy suggestions include expressing your emotions through journaling, art and speaking with a professional.

There are government and non-profit organizations devoted to helping victims. Some offer counseling, which includes mental health professionals, life coaches and support groups. One resource that can help is the 988 Lifeline, a national crisis center network that provides free and confidential emotional support. The government-run resource is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition, survivors and their families can utilize other services to find jobs, food and transportation. There are also resources to help family members cope with the indirect impact on their lives.

While survivors of traumatic injuries may initially feel alone and helpless, it's important to note this is not true. No one is ever alone. While each survivor's road to recovery may not follow the same pathway, there are steps to better oneself. As the unknown author of the quote suggests, a survivor can learn to live with the trauma and thrive in spite of it. [IS](#)



Understanding Personal Injury Laws: A Comprehensive Guide

by Hallie Dozier

Personal injury laws are a crucial aspect of the legal system designed to protect individuals who have been harmed due to the negligence, recklessness or intentional actions of another party. This guide aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of personal injury laws, highlighting essential elements such as types of cases, negligence, damages and the legal process involved.

Definition of Personal Injury

Personal injury law encompasses cases where an individual suffers harm as a result of another's actions. This harm can be physical, emotional or psychological. The primary objective of personal injury law is to provide compensation to the injured party for their losses and to hold the responsible party accountable.

Types of Personal Injury Cases

Personal injury cases can arise from various situations, each with unique circumstances and legal considerations. Some of the most common types include:

- » **Car Accidents:** These are the most prevalent personal injury cases. They often involve negligence, such as distracted driving, driving under the influence (DUI) or failure to adhere to traffic laws.
- » **Medical Malpractice:** When healthcare professionals fail to provide the standard of care expected, resulting in harm to the patient, it constitutes medical malpractice.

- » **Workplace Injuries:** Accidents that occur in the workplace are typically covered by workers' compensation laws. However, in cases of gross negligence, personal injury claims can be pursued.
- » **Slip and Fall:** Injuries sustained from slipping or tripping due to unsafe conditions on someone else's property fall under premises liability.
- » **Product Liability:** When defective or dangerous products cause harm, the manufacturers, distributors or retailers can be held accountable.
- » **Wrongful Death:** If an individual's death is caused by another's negligence or intentional act, the family of the deceased may file a wrongful death lawsuit.

Negligence

Proving negligence is central to winning a personal injury case. The plaintiff must demonstrate that the defendant had a duty to act reasonably, breached that duty and directly caused the injury. This involves establishing four key elements:

- 1 **Duty:** The defendant owed a duty of care to the plaintiff.
- 2 **Breach:** The defendant breached that duty by acting or failing to act in a certain way.
- 3 **Causation:** The breach of duty caused the plaintiff's injury.
- 4 **Damages:** The plaintiff suffered actual damages (physical, emotional or financial) as a result of the breach.

Statute of Limitations

The statute of limitations is the period within which a personal injury lawsuit must be filed. This period varies by state and the type of injury but generally ranges from one to six years. Failing to file a lawsuit within this timeframe can result in the loss of the right to seek compensation.

Damages

In personal injury cases, damages are categorized into two main types:

- 1 Compensatory Damages:** These aim to compensate the injured party for their losses. They include medical expenses, lost wages, pain and suffering, and other economic and non-economic damages.
- 2 Punitive Damages:** Awarded in cases of egregious wrongdoing, punitive damages are intended to punish the defendant and deter similar conduct in the future.

Comparative and Contributory Negligence

Different states follow different rules regarding the plaintiff's role in the injury:

- 1 Comparative Negligence:** If the plaintiff is found to be partially at fault, their compensation is reduced by their percentage of fault. For example, if a plaintiff is 20% at fault, they can only recover 80% of the total damages.
- 2 Contributory Negligence:** In some states, if the plaintiff is even slightly at fault (e.g., 1%), they may be barred from recovering any damages.

Insurance and Settlements

Many personal injury cases are resolved through settlements with insurance companies rather than going to trial. Understanding

one's insurance policy and the settlement process is crucial. Negotiating a fair settlement often requires knowledge of the extent of injuries, future medical needs and the full impact of the injury on the victim's life.

Legal Representation

Having an experienced personal injury lawyer can significantly impact the outcome of a case. Lawyers can navigate legal complexities, gather evidence, negotiate settlements and represent the plaintiff in court if necessary. Many personal injury lawyers work on a contingency fee basis, meaning they only get paid if they win the case, making legal representation accessible to those who might not afford it otherwise.

The Trial Process

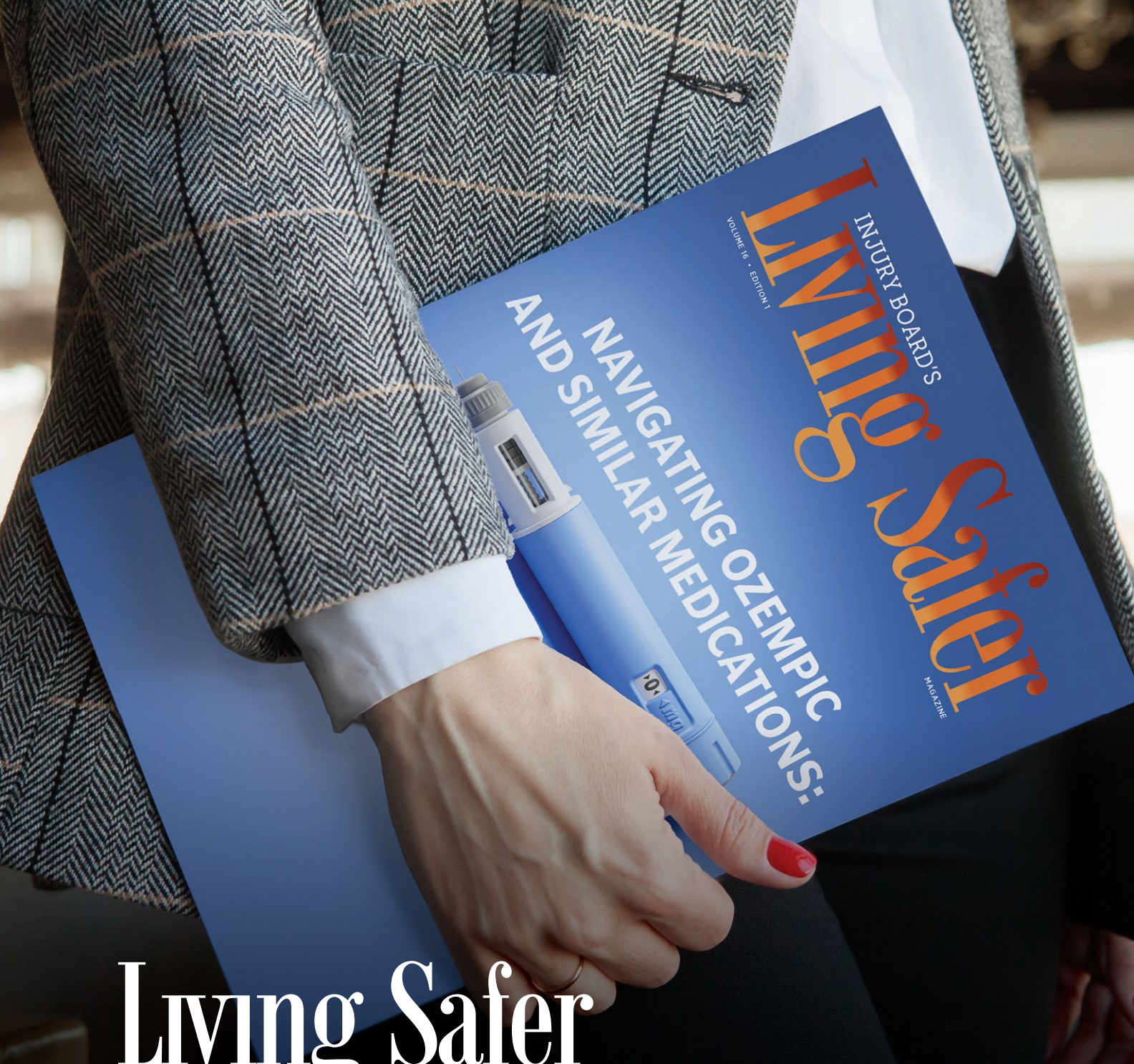
If a personal injury case goes to trial, it involves several stages: filing a complaint, discovery (exchange of evidence), trial and possibly an appeal. Understanding this process helps manage expectations and prepares the plaintiff for the legal journey ahead.

Burden of Proof

In personal injury cases, the burden of proof lies with the plaintiff. They must provide evidence that it is more likely than not that the defendant's actions caused the injury. This standard, known as the "preponderance of the evidence," is lower than the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard used in criminal cases.

Understanding personal injury laws equips individuals with the knowledge to protect their rights and make informed decisions if they ever need to pursue a claim. This comprehensive guide provides a foundation for navigating the complexities of personal injury cases, ensuring that victims can seek justice and receive the compensation they deserve. [IS](#)





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THE LEADING CAUSE OF PREVENTABLE DEATHS IN AMERICA

How to Stop Poisoning in Its Tracks

by Brandy Abalos

For more than a decade, poisoning has been the leading cause of preventable deaths in the U.S. When you think of someone being poisoned, you may imagine a child getting into household chemicals. However, the driving force of poisoning deaths nationally is drug overdoses. Preventable poisoning may not be what you think, but it can still be stopped in its tracks by public education and monitoring of unsafe substances.

What Is Preventable Poisoning?

Preventable poisoning is any poisoning incident that could have been avoided through proper precautions and awareness. Poisons are all around us, in our homes, gardens and workplaces, and sometimes even accidental ingestion or exposure can lead to serious health problems.

Here are some of the most common causes of preventable poisoning:

- ▲ **MEDICATIONS:** Improper use or accidental overdose of prescription and over-the-counter medications is a leading cause of preventable poisoning, especially among addicts, children and older adults.
- ▲ **HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS:** Many household cleaning supplies, disinfectants and personal care products contain toxic substances that can be poisonous if ingested or inhaled.
- ▲ **PLANTS:** Certain houseplants and garden plants contain toxins that can be harmful if ingested.
- ▲ **CARBON MONOXIDE:** This odorless and colorless gas can be deadly if inhaled and is a common poisoning risk in homes with faulty appliances or generators.
- ▲ **PESTICIDES:** Improperly stored or applied pesticides can be poisonous if ingested, inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

By being aware of these risks and taking steps to prevent them, you can significantly reduce the number of preventable poisoning incidents.

Poisoning Is the Leading Cause of Preventable Injury-Related Deaths

According to the National Safety Council, there are more than 100,000 poisoning deaths annually. This accounts for approximately 45% of all preventable injury-related deaths in the United States. In fact, poisoning fatalities are the leading cause of preventable deaths in people aged 25 to 34 and 55 to 64.

There are 55 poison control centers in the United States that receive reports and provide guidance for human poison exposures. According to the National Capital Poison Center, the centers receive over 2.08 million calls about human poisoning each year. That's about 6.1 poison exposures per 1,000 people in the U.S. Approximately one poison exposure is reported to the centers every 15 seconds.

Preventable poisonings affect all age groups, from infants to the elderly. However, children under the age of six represent a disproportionate percentage of cases reported to U.S. poison control centers. In 2021 (the most recent data available), 627 poisonings were reported per 100,000 people of all ages. However, there were 6,439 and 5,997 poisonings per 100,000 one- and two-year-olds, respectively. Approximately 640 exposures per 100,000 teens were reported.

More than 75% of all poisonings reported to the U.S. poison control centers were unintentional. Approximately 19% were intentional. Most unintentional poisonings occur in young children due to general exposures or therapeutic errors. Most intentional poisonings involve teens and are suspected suicide attempts.

Falls are the second leading cause of preventable deaths, followed by motor-vehicle crashes and choking. Some other common causes of preventable deaths

include drowning, natural heat and cold, and fires, flames, or smoke.

Many Medication & Substance Poisonings Were Intentional

Medication poisonings include over-the-counter, prescription, legal and illegal substances. While most cases were not fatal, there were a significant number of fatalities reported due to substance poisonings.

In 2021, according to the National Capital Poison Center, pain medications (analgesics) led the list of the most common substances resulting in poison exposures. There were approximately 136,380 cases of pain medication overdose, amounting to 11.2% of reported poison exposures.

Other substances that resulted in preventable poisonings included:

- ▲ **SEDATIVES/HYPNOTICS/ANTIPSYCHOTICS:** 91,521 cases (7.5% reported)
- ▲ **ANTIDEPRESSANTS:** 86,134 cases (7.1% reported)
- ▲ **CARDIOVASCULAR DRUGS:** 82,576 cases (6.8% reported)
- ▲ **ALCOHOLS:** 54,591 cases (4.5% reported)
- ▲ **ANTICONVULSANTS:** 46,258 cases (3.8% reported)
- ▲ **ANTIHISTAMINES:** 41,590 cases (3.4% reported)
- ▲ **STIMULANTS AND STREET DRUGS:** 39,465 cases (3.2% reported)

The most dangerous substances reported were acetaminophen, sedatives/hypnotics/antipsychotics, alcohols, pharmaceutical and illegal opioids, stimulants and street drugs. Painkillers made up approximately 21% of all deaths, followed by miscellaneous fumes/gasses/vapors, with 20% of deaths across all ages.



How to Prevent Medication Poisonings

Some general practices can be used to prevent medication and substance poisoning. By carefully storing prescriptions and other drugs and being careful with dosages, you may prevent an accident.

Here are some key steps to avoid preventable poisoning by medications:

- ✔ **Keep ALL medications, including vitamins and supplements, in a locked cabinet or out of the reach of children and pets.** This goes for purses and backpacks, too, where they might be easily accessible.
- ✔ **Store medications in their original, labeled containers.** This ensures you have the correct dosage information and any warnings readily available.
- ✔ **Follow proper storage instructions based on the medication** (e.g., some require refrigeration).
- ✔ **Never take more than the prescribed dosage of any medication.**
- ✔ **Use the measuring tool provided with the medication, not a kitchen spoon, to ensure accurate measurement.**
- ✔ **If you are unsure about dosage or have any questions, consult your doctor or pharmacist.**
- ✔ **Never share prescription medications with others.** Medications are prescribed for specific individuals and their conditions.
- ✔ **Keep a list of all medications you are taking, including over-the-counter drugs and supplements, to avoid accidental interactions.** Discuss this list with your doctor or pharmacist to check for potential conflicts.

- ✔ **Dispose of unused or expired medications safely.**

Don't flush them or throw them in the trash.

Many pharmacies have take-back programs, or you can follow specific disposal instructions for certain medications.

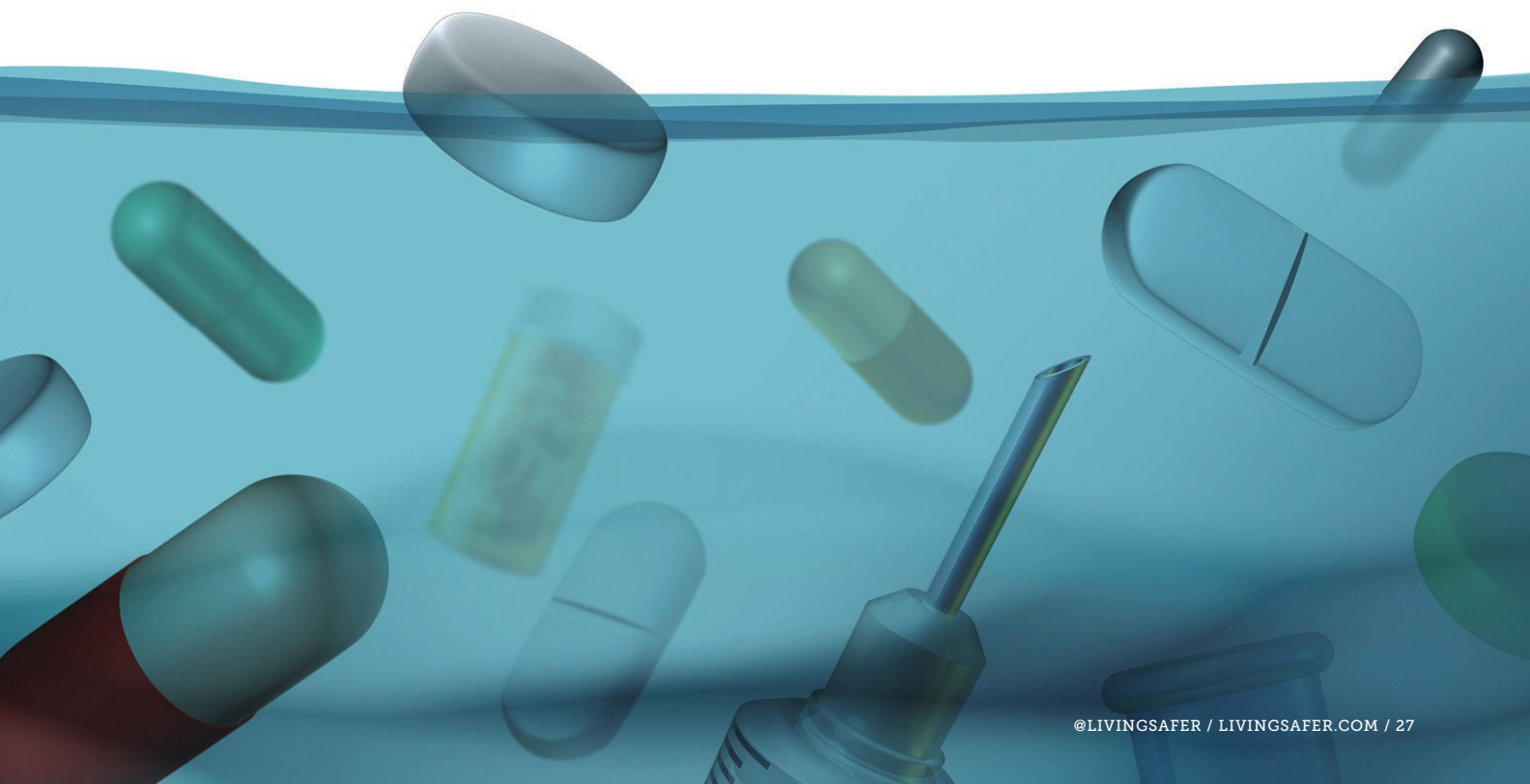
If someone you know—especially a teen—is at risk of suicide, ensure they do not have access to any type of medication or substances.

Household Product Poisonings Are Common in Young Children

Household products, such as cleaning substances and antifreeze, pose risks to young children because of their natural curiosity, limited understanding of danger and accessibility. These factors combined create a high risk for accidental poisoning in young children.

Young children are naturally curious and explore their surroundings by putting things in their mouths. This can include colorful cleaning products, brightly packaged medications, or even seemingly harmless items like laundry detergent pods. Additionally, they simply don't understand the potential dangers of these products. A brightly colored cleaning spray might look like a fun drink, or a button battery could resemble a piece of candy. Often, household products are stored within a child's reach, on low shelves, counters or in unlocked cabinets.

Cosmetics and personal care products led the list of the most common household substances implicated in pediatric exposures in 2021, the most recent year available from the National Capital Poison Center. 95,848 cases were reported, nearly 11% of the preventable poisonings that year. Household cleaning substances closely followed, with 94,279 cases, also nearly 11% of the reported cases.





Preventing Poisonings by Household Substances

Cleaning supplies, laundry detergents, personal care products and even hand sanitizer can all be poisonous if ingested. It's important to take some simple precautions, including:

- ✔ **Safe Storage:** Keep all potentially poisonous products out of the reach of children, ideally in locked cabinets or high shelves.
- ✔ **Original Containers:** Always store products in their original, labeled containers. This ensures proper identification and hazard warnings are readily available.
- ✔ **Secure Closures:** Make sure all containers are closed tightly after use.
- ✔ **Education:** Supervise young children closely and teach them about the dangers of putting unknown things in their mouths.
- ✔ **Minimize the Amount:** Only buy the amount of household products you need to avoid unnecessary stockpiles.
- ✔ **Dispose of Expired Products Safely:** Don't flush or pour chemicals down the drain. There are specific procedures for disposing of these products. Contact the manufacturer for more information.

Plant Toxins Can Harm Children and Animals

Plants can be beautiful additions to our homes and gardens, but many contain toxins that can be harmful to children and animals if ingested. Many common houseplants and garden plants contain various toxins that can cause a range of symptoms, from mild stomach upset to serious illness or even death. Some plants with toxins don't necessarily taste bad, so young children and curious pets might be more likely to ingest them. Depending on the plant and the individual, even small amounts of a toxic plant can cause harm.

Here are some common plants that are dangerous for children and pets:

- ⚠ **Dieffenbachia (Dumb Cane):** This popular houseplant contains calcium oxalate crystals that can cause mouth and throat irritation, vomiting and difficulty swallowing if ingested.
- ⚠ **Monstera Deliciosa (Swiss Cheese Plant):** Similar to Dieffenbachia, Monstera contains insoluble calcium oxalate crystals.
- ⚠ **Philodendron:** Another common houseplant that also contains calcium oxalate crystals.
- ⚠ **Peace Lily:** While beautiful and air-purifying, peace lilies contain a toxin that can cause irritation of the mouth, tongue and throat, as well as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea if ingested.
- ⚠ **Azalea and Rhododendron:** These popular flowering shrubs contain grayanotoxins, which can cause vomiting, diarrhea, drooling, weakness and difficulty breathing if ingested.

- ⚠ **Lilies:** There are many varieties of lilies, but all parts of the true lily plant (*Lilium* spp.) are toxic to cats and can cause kidney failure.
- ⚠ **Tulips and Daffodils:** The bulbs of tulips and daffodils contain toxins that can cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea if ingested.
- ⚠ **English Ivy:** This common climbing vine contains triterpenoid saponins that can cause irritation of the mouth, tongue and stomach if ingested.
- ⚠ **Sago Palm:** While not a true palm, sago palms are cycads and contain a toxin called cycasin that can be fatal to pets if ingested.

Protect Your Loved Ones from Preventable Plant Poisonings

Knowledge is power when keeping your children and pets away from toxic plants. Before bringing a new plant into your home or garden, research its potential toxicity. Many online resources and garden centers can help with identification and safety information. Consider using plant identification apps to easily check plants you encounter outdoors.

Create a safe environment in your home. Toxic plants should be out of reach of children and pets. If necessary, utilize high shelves, hanging planters or even locked cabinets. If you have young children or pets, there are many beautiful, non-toxic houseplants available. Research "pet-friendly" or "child-safe" houseplants to find suitable options.

Keep a watchful eye on your little ones. For young children, close supervision is key. Teach them not to put things in their mouths that aren't food. For older children, explain the dangers of specific plants in your home or garden.

How to Prevent Carbon Monoxide Poisoning in Your Home

Carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning is a serious threat in homes, especially during the winter months. This odorless and colorless gas can be deadly if inhaled in high concentrations.

According to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), those most at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning are infants, the elderly and people with chronic heart problems, anemia and breathing problems. Each year, more than 100,000 people visit the emergency room because of CO poisoning, and more than 400 Americans die from unintentional carbon monoxide poisoning.

Here's how you can prevent carbon monoxide poisoning in your home:

- ✔ **Install carbon monoxide detectors on every floor of your home.**
- ✔ **Maintain fuel-burning appliances, such as your heating system and water heater.**
- ✔ **Use gas appliances properly, including your oven, range and generator.**
- ✔ **Never run a generator inside your home or garage, even with the doors open.**

- ✔ **Don't use charcoal or gas grills indoors, even in a fireplace.**
- ✔ **Never leave a car running in an attached garage, even with the door open.**
- ✔ **Open a damper when using a fireplace, ensuring proper ventilation.**

You should also be aware of the symptoms of preventable CO poisoning. Early signs of CO poisoning can be flu-like, including headache, nausea, dizziness and fatigue. If you or someone in your home experiences these symptoms, especially if several people are affected at once, turn off all fuel-burning appliances and evacuate the house immediately. Open doors and windows to ventilate the space. Call 911 or your local emergency number immediately.

Unintentional Pesticide Poisoning Is Most Common in Children

While pesticides benefit society, they are inherently toxic and can severely harm children if stored or used improperly. According to the National Pesticide Information Center, more than 2 million poisoning incidents involving pesticides occur each year. Approximately 50% of those involve children under the age of six, and 90% occur in the home.

The American Association of Poison Control reported receiving more than 70,000 calls annually due to household pesticide exposure. Data indicates that among households with children under the age of five, at least half store pesticides within reach of children.

Children are so susceptible to pesticides because their nervous, immune, digestive and other systems are still developing. Compared to adults, their systems are less able to detoxify and excrete pollutants.

Preventing Pesticide Toxicity in Children

Pesticide toxicity can have both short- and long-term effects on children. Some short-term effects include headaches, dizziness, weakness and nausea. Long-term health effects may include birth defects, learning disabilities, behavioral changes, cancer and organ damage.

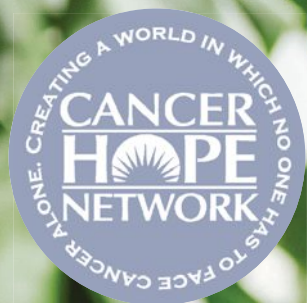
Some steps you can take to protect your children from preventable pesticide exposure include:

- ✔ **Keep It Out of Reach:** Store all pesticides, herbicides and insecticides out of the reach and sight of children. Ideally, this means using locked cabinets or high shelves in a secure location, like a garage or shed. Never leave them under the sink or other easily accessible areas.
- ✔ **Original Containers:** Always keep pesticides in their original, labeled containers. This ensures proper identification and hazard warnings are readily available. Don't transfer them to unmarked containers, especially something that could resemble food or drink.
- ✔ **Read and Follow Labels:** Before using any pesticide, carefully read and follow proper application methods, safety precautions and recommended storage information.
- ✔ **Minimize Use:** Whenever possible, opt for non-toxic or least-toxic pest control methods. Many natural and organic alternatives are available.
- ✔ **Disposal:** Dispose of unused or expired pesticides safely. Refrain from pouring them down the drain or tossing them in the trash. Many communities have hazardous waste disposal programs, or you can follow specific disposal instructions on the pesticide label.
- ✔ **Supervise During Application:** Never apply pesticides when children are present.
- ✔ **Lawn Care Safety:** Don't allow children or pets onto treated lawns until the product has dried completely, and follow the recommended waiting times on the label.
- ✔ **Teach Your Children:** As children get older, educate them about the dangers of pesticides and the importance of not touching them.
- ✔ **Consider Licensed Professionals:** For complex pest problems, consider hiring a licensed pest control professional. They have the expertise and equipment to handle pesticides safely and effectively.

Knowledge is Power: Prevent Poisonings in Your Home

Poisonings are the leading cause of preventable deaths in the United States. While there are many causes—from medication overdose to pesticide exposure—everyone is at risk. Protect your loved ones from toxic poisonings by educating yourself about the risk factors and taking action. [IS](#)





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Afraid to ask for help
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We understand.
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**To be matched with a Peer Support Mentor, please call us at 877-HOPENET
or visit us online at cancerhopenetwork.org**

The Impact of Nutrition on Mental Health: Foods That Support Emotional Well-Being

by Reid Cannon





What we eat has a profound impact on how we feel mentally and emotionally. A balanced diet rich in nutrients like vitamins, minerals and antioxidants can significantly improve your mood, focus and overall well-being. There are some key foods that you can incorporate into your diet for better mental health.

Certain Foods Support Emotional Well-Being

Food supports emotional well-being in two main ways: through the provision of essential nutrients and by influencing our gut health, which can in turn impact mood. The food we eat supplies the building blocks for neurotransmitters, the brain chemicals that regulate mood, sleep and focus. For example, dark leafy greens are rich in B vitamins and folate, crucial for dopamine and serotonin production, promoting feelings of happiness and well-being.

A growing body of research suggests a strong link between the gut microbiome, the trillions of bacteria residing in our gut, and mental health. Fermented foods like yogurt and kimchi are rich in probiotics, live bacteria that contribute to a healthy gut environment. This, in turn, has been associated with improved mood and reduced anxiety.

Fatty Fish

Rich in omega-3 fatty acids, particularly EPA and DHA, fatty fish like salmon, mackerel and sardines are essential for brain health. Omega-3s play a crucial role in neurotransmitter function, which regulates mood and cognitive function. Studies have shown that consuming omega-3s can help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Dark Leafy Greens

Leafy greens like spinach, kale and Swiss chard are full of folate and B vitamins, which are vital for the production of neurotransmitters like dopamine and serotonin. These neurotransmitters are responsible for feelings of happiness and well-being, as well as regulating sleep patterns.

Berries

Berries are loaded with antioxidants, which can help protect the brain from oxidative stress and inflammation. Studies have linked berry consumption to reduced symptoms of depression and improved cognitive function.

Nuts and Seeds

Nuts and seeds are a great source of healthy fats, protein, fiber and B vitamins. They also contain minerals like magnesium and zinc, which are essential for neurotransmitter function and overall brain health.

Fermented Foods

Fermented foods like yogurt, kimchi and kombucha are packed with probiotics, which are live bacteria that benefit gut health. A healthy gut microbiome has been linked to improved mood and reduced anxiety symptoms.

Tips for Incorporating These Foods into Your Diet

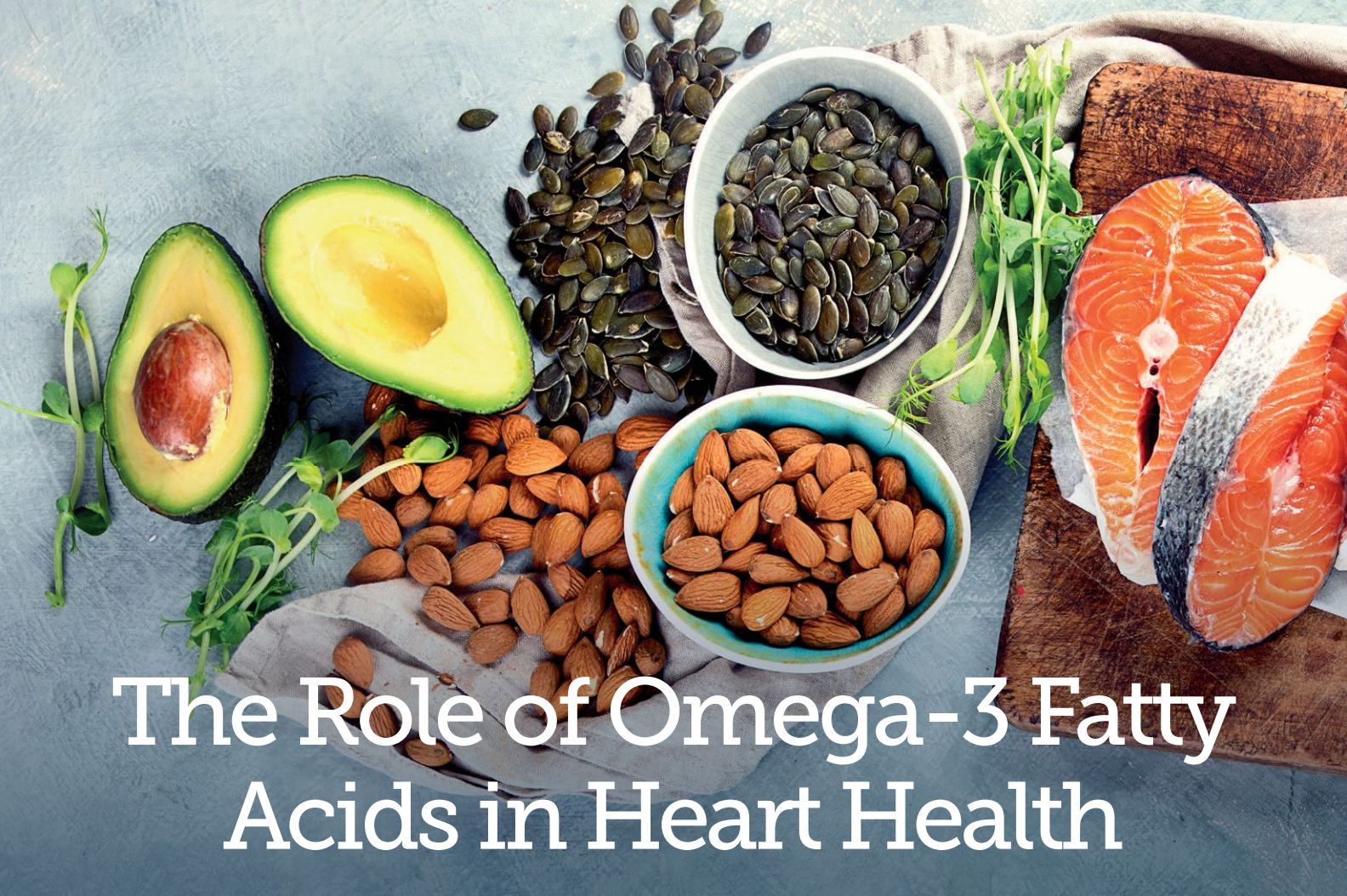
Small swaps can make a big impact. You should also try to make the integration of emotionally supportive foods fun and flavorful. Additionally, planning and preparation are key. When you develop meal plans and prepare food ahead of time, it's easier to get in those foods that support your emotional well-being.

Here are some tips to seamlessly integrate mood-boosting foods into your diet:

- » **Breakfast Upgrade:** Ditch the sugary cereals for a protein and fiber-rich bowl of Greek yogurt with berries and nuts.
- » **Snack Smarter:** Instead of chips, grab a handful of almonds, edamame or a sliced apple with almond butter.
- » **Grain Game:** Swap refined white bread for whole-wheat options. This keeps you fuller for longer and provides sustained energy.
- » **Power Up Pasta:** Opt for whole-wheat pasta and toss it with salmon, spinach, and a light tomato sauce for a complete and satisfying meal.
- » **Spice Up Your Life:** Experiment with mood-boosting spices like turmeric and saffron. They add flavor and have potential benefits for brain health.
- » **Rainbow on Your Plate:** Include a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables in your meals. They are not only visually appealing but also packed with mood-supporting vitamins and antioxidants.
- » **Get Creative with Salads:** Salads don't have to be boring! Add lean protein like grilled chicken or chickpeas, healthy fats like avocado, and a variety of veggies and fruits for a taste and nutrient explosion.
- » **Healthy Snack Hacks:** Prepare healthy snacks in advance, such as portioned fruit cups with a dollop of yogurt or pre-cut veggies with hummus. This makes grabbing a healthy option convenient.
- » **Meal Prep Magic:** Dedicate some time on weekends to prepping healthy snacks and chopped vegetables for easy access throughout the week.
- » **Befriend Frozen:** Frozen fruits and vegetables are a lifesaver. They are readily available, affordable and retain most of their nutrients.
- » **Stock Up on Staples:** Keep your pantry stocked with healthy staples like whole grains, nuts, seeds, canned beans and canned fish to whip up quick and nutritious meals.

Using Foods to Support Your Mental Health

Food can provide comfort and enjoyment, which can be a positive influence on emotional well-being. Sharing meals with loved ones or savoring a delicious dish can boost mood. However, a healthy diet is just one piece of the puzzle for emotional well-being. If you're struggling with mental health concerns, seeking professional help from a therapist or psychiatrist is crucial. [IS](#)



The Role of Omega-3 Fatty Acids in Heart Health

by Brandy Abalos

By eating foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, you can support many health benefits. Essentially, omega-3s can contribute to a healthy heart. They have been shown to lower triglycerides, reduce inflammation, lower blood pressure, decrease the risk of blood clots and support a healthy heart rhythm. It can be a challenge to work omega-3s into your diet, but with education about how they operate, you will understand the importance.

What Are Omega-3 Fatty Acids?

Omega-3 fatty acids are a type of polyunsaturated fat that have been shown to have several health benefits, including protecting against heart disease. Our bodies don't produce omega-3s on their own, so we need to get them from our diet.

There are three main types of omega-3 fatty acids:

- » Alpha-linolenic acid (ALA)
- » Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA)
- » Docosahexaenoic acid (DHA)

ALA is found in plant sources such as flaxseed, chia seeds and walnuts. EPA and DHA are found in fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel and tuna.

Omega-3s Lower Triglycerides

The exact mechanism for how omega-3 fatty acids lower

triglycerides isn't fully understood, but research suggests they influence several factors in fat metabolism, including the suppression of triglyceride production, increased fat burning, reduced very-low-density lipoprotein (which transports triglycerides) production and enhanced removal of triglycerides.

Omega-3s Reduce Inflammation

Omega-3 fatty acids combat inflammation through various mechanisms that dampen the body's inflammatory response. Omega-3s compete with omega-6 fatty acids for enzymes that produce inflammatory molecules called eicosanoids. Omega-6s tend to generate more pro-inflammatory eicosanoids, while omega-3s favor the production of less inflammatory ones. By influencing these pathways, omega-3s can tip the scales toward a less inflammatory state.

Additionally, omega-3 fatty acids reduce the production of inflammatory mediators. Omega-3s can directly decrease the production of inflammatory signaling molecules like cytokines, which are involved in orchestrating the inflammatory response.

Omega-3s Reduce Blood Pressure

Omega-3 fatty acids reduce blood pressure through several pathways. Omega-3s, particularly EPA and DHA, may help blood vessels relax and dilate, reducing resistance to blood flow. This



relaxation is partly due to the increased production of nitric oxide, a molecule that signals vessels to widen. Also, Omega-3s influence hormones and the nervous system, which play a role in regulating blood pressure.

The overall effect of omega-3s on blood pressure seems to be modest but beneficial. Omega-3s result in a small but significant reduction in blood pressure, particularly in people with high blood pressure or those at higher cardiovascular risk.

Omega-3s Reduce the Risk of Blood Clots

Omega-3 fatty acids can influence several aspects of blood clotting to potentially reduce the risk. Platelets are blood cell fragments that clump together to form clots. Omega-3s can make platelets less sticky, hindering their ability to clump and form clots. As discussed earlier, omega-3s have anti-inflammatory effects. Since inflammation can contribute to clot formation, reducing inflammation with omega-3s decreases clotting risk.

It's important to clarify that omega-3s don't directly thin the blood like medications such as blood thinners. However, by influencing the factors mentioned above, they can create an environment less conducive to clot formation. Omega-3s seem to work indirectly to reduce blood clot risk by making platelets less sticky, mitigating inflammation and potentially improving blood vessel health.

Omega-3s Help Maintain a Healthy Heart Rhythm

Omega-3s influence the electrical impulses that coordinate heartbeats. They help stabilize these electrical signals, reducing the risk of irregular rhythms. Omega-3s can be incorporated into the cell membranes of heart muscle cells. This might influence how these cells respond to electrical signals, potentially promoting a more stable heart rhythm.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids Can Support a Healthy Heart

Omega-3 fatty acids offer a variety of benefits that contribute to a healthy heart. The American Heart Association recommends that adults eat at least two servings of fatty fish per week. You can also get omega-3 fatty acids from plant sources, but ALA needs to be converted into EPA and DHA in the body, and this conversion process is not very efficient.

A well-balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and healthy fats is essential for overall heart health. Omega-3s are a great piece of the puzzle, but they work best alongside other heart-healthy habits.

If you are considering taking an omega-3 supplement, it is important to talk to your doctor first. Omega-3 supplements can interact with some medications, and high doses of omega-3s can increase your risk of bleeding. [IS](#)

Small Hearts



Big Challenges

Early Detection Leads to Early Prevention

Small hearts can conceal big challenges, especially when it comes to congenital heart defects. Nearly one in three infants who die from birth defects has this condition. But a simple, non-invasive screening for all newborns could save the life of your child or the child of someone you know.

Tell your legislator to support pulse-oximetry testing for all newborns.
Get involved at YoureTheCure.org



American Heart Association | **American Stroke Association®**

Heart Disease and Stroke. You're the Cure.

YoureTheCure.org



Childproofing Your Home: Ensuring Safety for Kids

by Wayne Parsons

As children grow, their curiosity leads them to explore their surroundings, which can sometimes result in dangerous situations. Did you know that the cords on window shades are a choking risk for infants? Did you know that 5-year-olds can get to window openings despite moving furniture away and open a locked window? Once there, the normal light window screens pop out with a child's push, and because a child's head is heavy compared to their body size and weight, their head will pull them through the opening. Childproofing your home involves not underestimating your children's abilities when identifying potential hazards. Then, take proactive measures to prevent serious injuries.

Identifying Common Hazards

Common hazards are choking, poisoning, falling, drowning and electrical dangers. Small objects like coins, buttons, batteries and objects on toys pose choking risks, while household chemicals, medications and certain plants can be poisonous if ingested. Staircases, windows and furniture that children can climb present falling risks, while bathtubs, pools and even buckets of water are potential drowning hazards. Lastly, electrical outlets, cords and appliances pose the risk of electric shock.

Securing Furniture and Appliances

Anchor large bookshelves, dressers and televisions to the wall to prevent tipping over. Appliances like toaster ovens and microwaves should be out of children's reach or have safety locks. Additionally, avoid placing tempting objects like toys or remote controls on top of heavy furniture, which might encourage climbing.

Installing Safety Gates and Guards

Safety gates are essential for blocking access to dangerous areas such as staircases, kitchens and bathrooms. Install gates at both the top and bottom of the stairs. Additionally, window fall protection devices can prevent children from falling out of windows. Note that window opening control devices (WOCDs) often fail, so use a bar system or safety screens that will not pop out.

Locking Away Hazardous Substances

Store household chemicals, medications and cleaning supplies out of sight in locked cabinets. Use child-resistant locks on cabinets and drawers. Educate older children about the dangers of these substances and the importance of not tampering with the locks.

Preventing Electrical Hazards

Cover electrical outlets with outlet protectors that are not easily removable by children. Keep electrical cords out of

reach and secure to the wall where possible. Avoid using extension cords and power strips in areas accessible to children. For appliances, use safety latches to prevent children from turning them on or pulling them down.

Drowning Prevention

Drowning is a leading cause of accidental death in young children, making it crucial to secure all water sources. Never leave a child unattended in the bathtub, and always empty water from tubs, buckets and containers immediately after use. If you have a pool, ensure you surround it with a fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate. Pool alarms and safety covers add additional layers of protection.

Fall Prevention

Use non-slip mats and secure rugs and carpets. Install safety rails where necessary. Make sure that cribs and playpens meet safety standards and that their sides are high enough to prevent children from climbing out. Repair or discard wobbly furniture.

Safe Play Areas

Designate safe play areas within your home where children can explore without encountering hazards. Use soft flooring materials like foam mats to cushion falls and remove any sharp or breakable objects. Ensure that toys are age-appropriate and free from small parts that could pose choking hazards. Regularly inspect toys for wear and tear and discard damaged ones.

Educating Caregivers and Family Members

Educate caregivers, babysitters and family members about safety measures and ensure they follow them consistently. Create a checklist of safety precautions and review it regularly to account for any changes in your child's environment or behavior.

Staying Informed

Childproofing guidelines and recommendations can change, so it is essential to stay informed about the latest safety standards. Organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) provide up-to-date information on child safety. Regularly review their websites and resources to ensure your home remains a safe environment for your children.

Conclusion

Remember, childproofing is an ongoing process that evolves as your child grows, requiring constant vigilance and adaptation. [IS](#)



Benefits of Playing Outside and How to Encourage Your Kids

by Brandy Abalos

Playing outside is like a full-body and mind boost for kids. The sun offers essential vitamins and outdoor play has physical and mental benefits. Kids who play outdoors are curious and creative, using all their senses to learn about the natural world. Also, most kids who play outside join friends and develop socially as well. The benefits of playing outside are numerous.

However, with today's technology, it can be difficult to get your kids out the door. They often want to play on electronic devices instead of engaging with nature. Getting your kids outside can feel like an uphill battle sometimes, but it's worth the effort.

Outdoor Time Promotes Physical Health

Sunshine boosts vitamin D levels, which helps with bone development and can protect against some diseases. Running, jumping and climbing outdoors strengthens muscles, improves

coordination and combats childhood obesity.

Spending time in nature may also enhance the immune system. Exposure to certain microbes in natural environments may help train the body's defenses. Outdoor time provides a natural way for children to develop strong bodies, improve their physical fitness and reduce the risk of chronic health problems in the future.

Playing Outside Supports Mental Well-Being

Playing outside is like a magic medication for children, promoting their mental well-being in a multitude of ways. Nature has a calming effect. Spending time outdoors can lower cortisol levels, the stress hormone, leading to feelings of relaxation and an improved mood. Being outdoors provides a break from the constant stimulation of screens and indoor environments. Nature's sights and sounds can improve focus and concentration,

which can benefit children in school and everyday life.

Physical activity releases endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Outdoor play encourages exercise, which can elevate mood, combat symptoms of depression and promote feelings of happiness. Spending time outdoors fosters a connection with the natural world. This connection can be a source of comfort and inspiration, promoting a sense of peace and reducing feelings of isolation.

Outdoor Play Sparks Learning and Development

The great outdoors is a sensory feast. Kids can feel the grass under their feet, smell the pine needles in the air, hear the chirping of birds and see the shapes of clouds. This exposure to different sights, sounds, textures and smells stimulates the brain and helps them learn about the world around them. The open-ended nature of outdoor play ignites curiosity. There are endless possibilities for exploration—building forts, digging in the dirt or catching bugs. This unstructured environment allows for creative expression and problem-solving as they figure things out on their own.

The outdoor environment presents both challenges and opportunities for risk-taking. Climbing a tree requires planning and problem-solving skills. Building a fort involves trial and error. Through these experiences, children learn to assess risks, make decisions and overcome obstacles, fostering resilience and resourcefulness.

Playing Outdoors Boosts Social Skills

The great outdoors transforms into a social playground for children, offering a natural way to develop and strengthen their social skills. Outdoor games and activities often involve teamwork and collaboration. Whether it's building a sandcastle together, playing tag or participating in group sports, children learn to interact with others, share, take turns and resolve conflicts peacefully.

Playing outdoors provides endless opportunities for children to communicate with their peers. They learn to express themselves clearly, give instructions, negotiate and listen attentively to others. Through shared experiences and collaboration in outdoor play, children build friendships and develop a sense of belonging. They

learn empathy and understanding as they interact with others from different backgrounds.

Tips on How to Get Your Kids Outside

Here are some tips to transform your backyard or neighborhood into your kids' personal playground and get them excited about spending time outdoors:

- » **Start small:** Don't overwhelm them with long treks. Even 15 minutes a day in the backyard can make a difference.
- » **Make it fun:** Think beyond just "go play outside." Plan a nature scavenger hunt, have a water balloon fight or build a fort together.
- » **Lead by example:** Join them in their adventures! Go for walks together, play catch or have picnics in the park. Your enthusiasm is contagious.
- » **Limit screen time:** Set boundaries on electronics and gently nudge them towards outdoor activities.
- » **Explore different places:** Parks, gardens, zoos or even your own backyard can be exciting with a fresh perspective. Take a hike, visit a new playground or go stargazing at night.
- » **Cater to their interests:** Do they love bugs? Get a magnifying glass and explore the garden. Are they fascinated by dinosaurs? Have a "paleontology dig" in the sandbox.
- » **Think outside the box:** Bring their favorite indoor activities outside. Draw with sidewalk chalk, build with blocks in the yard or read a book under a tree.
- » **Involve them in planning:** Let them choose what they want to do outdoors, even if it's just picking the park they want to visit. A sense of ownership can boost their enthusiasm.

Help Your Children Enjoy the Outdoors

There are many benefits to playing outdoors. However, parents face challenges in getting their kids out of the house. Although it can be tough, children need the experiences they will have outside of the house. With a little creativity, you can help your kids discover the magic of playing outside. [IS](#)





How to Help Toddlers Cope with Big Emotions

by Drew Ellis

Toddlers are learning about the world and their place in it, and that can lead to some big emotions that they may not know how to handle. Toddlers have a developing brain, particularly the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for regulating emotions. Additionally, toddlers are still learning to talk and may not be able to express their feelings well. These factors often lead to blow-ups. However, there are steps you can take to help your little one deal with big emotions.

Acknowledge and Validate Their Feelings

When you acknowledge toddlers' feelings, you show them that you hear them and that their emotions are valid. This builds trust and strengthens your bond. By letting them know it's okay to feel sad, mad, frustrated or scared, you create a safe space where they can express themselves freely. This is crucial for their emotional development.

When you validate their feelings, it shows them they don't need to act out to be heard. Over time, they learn to soothe themselves and

express their needs calmly. To do this, keep your language simple and focus on their feelings – not the situation. Show empathy and use nonverbal cues as well.

Help Them Name Their Feelings

Toddlers may not have the vocabulary to express themselves fully. You can help them by labeling their emotions, such as "Are you feeling angry because you can't have that cookie?" Toddlers are still learning to talk and may not be able to express their feelings very well. This frustration can lead to even bigger meltdowns.

Toddlers are a whirlwind of emotions, but putting a name to those feelings can be tricky for them. Throughout the day, talk about their emotions in a casual way. For example, "You seem excited to see your friend at the park!" or "It sounds like you're frustrated you can't climb on that rock." Books and flashcards with clear illustrations of emotions can be a great teaching tool. Point to the pictures and discuss the feelings they represent. Act out the emotions with funny voices to make it more engaging. Toddlers will eventually build their communication skills and be able to name their own emotions.

Use Calming Techniques

Calming techniques help toddlers learn healthy ways to manage their frustrations and strong feelings. By practicing calming techniques, toddlers learn to manage their emotions independently. This is a crucial skill for emotional well-being throughout life. Having a toolbox of calming techniques equips toddlers to deal with challenging situations in a healthy way.

Introduce calming techniques during playtime, not just during

meltdowns. This way, they become familiar and more readily used when needed. Turn calming techniques into a game or activity. Sing a song about taking deep breaths, blow bubbles and watch them float up slowly, or do silly yoga poses together. Children learn by observing adults. Practice calming techniques yourself when you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed. It takes time and practice for toddlers to master calming techniques. Be patient and offer support as they learn.

Set Limits with Love

Setting limits for toddlers with big emotions can feel counterintuitive. However, clear and consistent limits actually provide a sense of security and help toddlers navigate their strong feelings. Limits provide structure and help toddlers understand what's expected of them. This predictability fosters a sense of safety and security, which is crucial for emotional well-being.

When setting limits, focus on the behavior, not the emotion. Acknowledge their feelings but limit the action. Use positive language. Instead of saying, "Don't hit," say, "Use gentle hands." Positive language focuses on the desired behavior. Offer choices when possible. Be firm and consistent, and follow through with natural consequences.

Your Toddler Can Learn to Manage Difficult Emotions with Help

Toddlers are little emotional whirlwinds, and their big feelings can be tough to handle for both them and you. But the good news is there are many ways you can help them develop the skills they need to manage their emotions healthily. [IS](#)



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Think Life 



Luis

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Luis has high blood pressure but that doesn't stop him from living his dream of driving cross-country. What Luis didn't know was that his condition put him at higher risk for fatty liver disease.

An estimated 80-100 million people in the US have fatty liver disease. Certain other health conditions can put people at a higher risk. Some liver diseases are preventable and many can be reversed if detected early. To learn more or to find out if you or a loved one are at risk, please visit thinkliverthinklife.org.

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Safe Cooking Practices: Preventing Kitchen Accidents

by Drew Ellis

Cooking delicious meals is a great skill, but it's important to prioritize safety in the kitchen. Kitchen accidents can lead to serious injuries, including burns, cuts and even fires. By following safe cooking practices, you're creating a win-win situation: preventing harm to yourself and others while also ensuring the food you prepare is delicious and safe to eat.

Cleanliness Is Key

Wash your hands thoroughly with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds before and after handling food. Wash fruits and vegetables under running water. Keep surfaces and utensils clean with hot, soapy water or a sanitizing solution.

Separate to Prevent Contamination

Separating food in the kitchen is crucial to prevent cross-contamination, which is the transfer of harmful bacteria from one food to another. Use separate cutting boards and plates for raw meat, poultry and seafood to avoid spreading bacteria to other foods. Wash them thoroughly after each use.

Cook to Safe Temperatures

Cooking food to safe temperatures is essential to kill harmful bacteria that can cause foodborne illness. These bacteria can multiply rapidly at temperatures between 40°F (4°C) and 140°F (60°C), often referred to as the "danger zone." Food thermometers measure the internal temperature of the food, which is the most accurate way to determine doneness. Don't rely on appearance or cooking time alone.

Some examples of safe cooking temperatures for meats include:

- » Ground meats and sausage: 160°F (71°C)
- » Poultry and fowl: 165°F (74°C)
- » Beef, veal, lamb (steaks, roasts, chops): 145°F (63°C)

Refrigerate Promptly

Refrigerating promptly after cooking is the cornerstone of safe food storage and preventing foodborne illness. Leaving cooked food in the "danger zone" for extended periods allows bacteria to grow to dangerous levels, increasing the risk of foodborne illness if consumed.

Prevent Kitchen Fires

Kitchen fires are the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries in the United States, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). However, they are preventable.

Never leave cooking unattended, especially on the stovetop. If you must leave the kitchen, turn off the stovetop completely. Avoid overheating oil in pans, as it can splatter and ignite. Use proper potholders or mitts when handling hot pots and pans. Keep

flammable objects like oven mitts, towels, and wooden utensils away from the stovetop and oven. Clean up spills from the stovetop immediately to prevent them from igniting.

You should also have a fire extinguisher on hand in the kitchen and know how to use it. Remember the acronym PASS for using a fire extinguisher: Pull the pin, Aim at the base of the fire, Squeeze the lever, and Sweep the nozzle across the flames.

Sharp Knife Safety

Sharp knives are safer if you know how to handle them correctly. A dull knife requires more force to cut through food. This extra force increases the chance of the knife slipping, losing control and potentially causing a cut. A sharp knife glides through food effortlessly, minimizing the risk of slipping.

There are safe practices for using sharp knives. Use the right knife for the job. Hold the knife handle firmly with a secure grip. Keep your other hand away from the blade. Cut away from yourself. You should also sharpen your knives regularly and store them safely.

Avoid Slips, Trips and Falls

Kitchens are notorious for slip-and-fall hazards. The number one rule is to clean up spills of food, grease, water and other splatters immediately. Use the right footwear and keep the floor dry. Watch for tripping hazards by decluttering your floor. Ensure you have proper lighting throughout your kitchen. Use extra caution for wet areas and consider placing non-slip mats in those locations. Slips, trips and falls can be avoided in the kitchen with these actions.

Beware of Burns

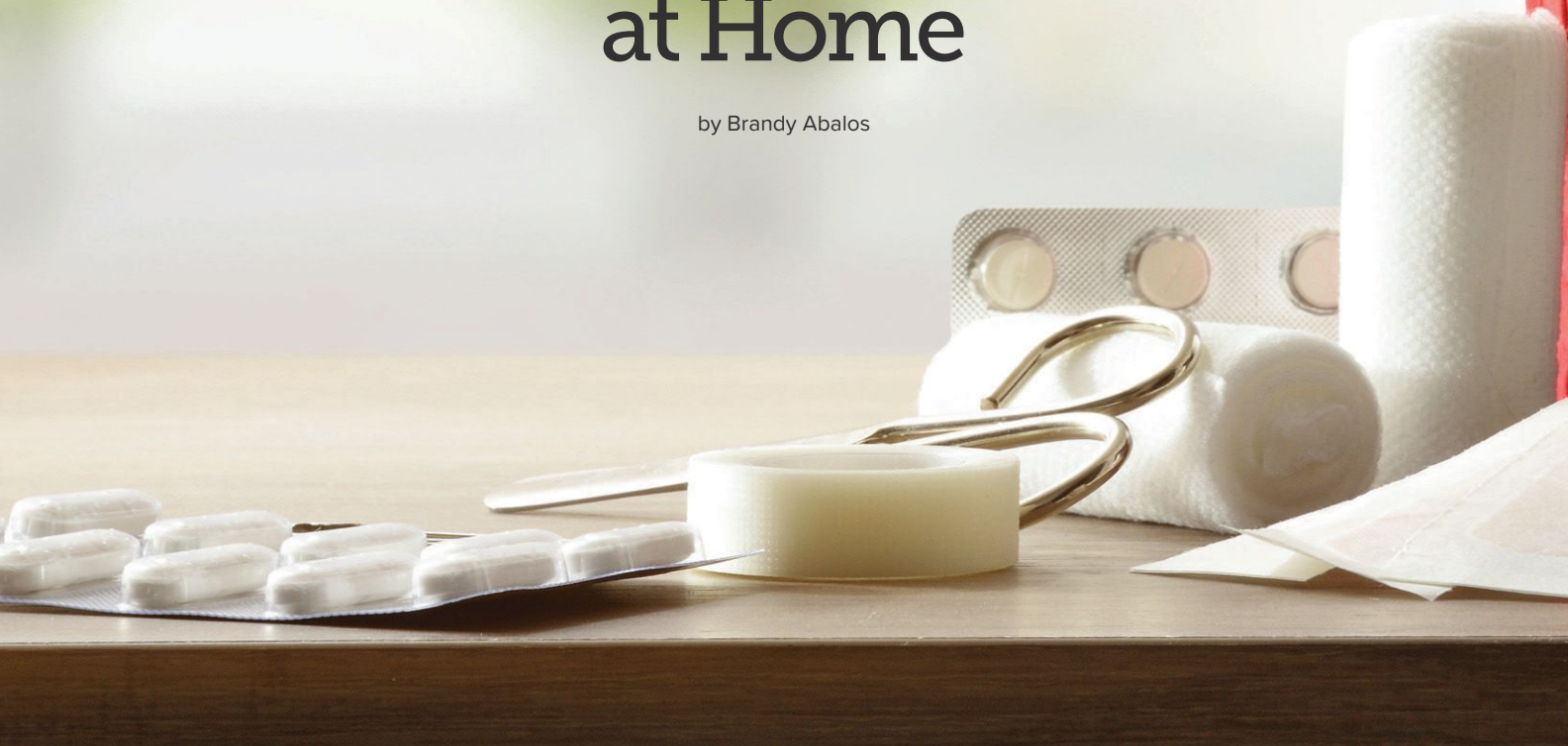
Kitchen burns are a common but preventable occurrence. Never leave pots and pans unattended on the stovetop, especially when cooking with oil or high heat. Always use oven mitts or potholders when handling hot pots, pans and oven dishes. Make sure your mitts are heat-resistant and in good condition, not worn or torn. Be aware of steam escaping from pots and pans. Use pot lids to trap steam and tilt them away from you when opening to avoid scalding. When using the stovetop, turn the pot handles inward to avoid accidentally bumping or knocking them over. By following these practices and being mindful of heat sources in the kitchen, you can significantly reduce your risk of getting burned while cooking.

Prevent Kitchen Accidents with Safe Cooking Practices

Burns, cuts and even fires can all be prevented by following basic safety guidelines. Safe cooking practices aren't just about protecting yourself. If you share your kitchen with others, like children or pets, following safety measures helps keep everyone safe from potential hazards. In essence, safe cooking practices are an investment in your well-being and the welfare of those around you. [LS](#)

Emergency First Aid Training at Home

by Brandy Abalos



While a formal in-person class is ideal for hands-on practice, you can definitely get a strong foundation in first aid training at home. Many reputable organizations offer free or low-cost first aid information online.

When providing emergency first aid, always prioritize calling emergency services (911) for life-threatening situations.

Minor Wounds and Scrapes

Minor wounds and scrapes are a common occurrence. Cleanse the wound by removing dirt and debris and using mild soap and water around the wound. Stop any bleeding by applying gentle pressure with clean gauze or a cloth. Promote healing by using a thin layer of antibiotic ointment and covering the wound with a sterile bandage.

Burns

Burns are common in the home, especially in kitchens and bathrooms. For minor burns, run cool (not cold) water over the area for 10-15 minutes. Loosely cover the burn with a sterile bandage or clean cloth. Do not use butter, ointments or petroleum jelly. Over-the-counter pain relievers like ibuprofen or acetaminophen can help with pain.

Choking

It is crucial to learn the proper technique for the Heimlich maneuver before you perform it on an individual. You can find

resources online or take a first aid course. If an infant is choking and cannot cough or cry, perform the Heimlich maneuver for infants. If an adult is choking and cannot cough or speak, perform the Heimlich maneuver for adults.

Allergic Reactions

If someone is experiencing a severe allergy or anaphylactic reaction, call 911 immediately. Milder allergic reactions can be treated at home. If possible, remove the person from the source of the allergen. For example, if they're allergic to pollen, bring them inside. You can also make the person more comfortable by elevating their head and loosening any tight clothing or applying cool compresses to itchy areas.

If the person has mild symptoms like hives, itching or watery eyes, you can give them an over-the-counter antihistamine like diphenhydramine (Benadryl) according to the recommended dosage. Always check the expiration date and follow dosage instructions carefully.

Fevers

A fever itself isn't usually a cause for alarm. It's the body's natural response to fight infection. However, you should seek medical attention if the person is an infant under three months old, the fever is above 103°F for adults or 104°F for children, the fever is accompanied by severe headache, stiff neck, confusion or difficulty breathing, or it persists for more than three days.



To treat mild fevers at home, first encourage rest. Hydration is important, and you can also apply cool, damp cloths to the forehead or neck. Dress the person in loose, lightweight clothing. You can give acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) to help bring down the fever and manage discomfort. Always follow the recommended dosage based on age and weight. Never give aspirin to children or teenagers due to the risk of Reye's syndrome.

Animal Bites

Severe bites or bites from wild animals always require medical attention from a professional. Call emergency services (911) if the bite is deep, has a puncture wound, is bleeding excessively, or if the animal is wild.

For minor bites, first wash your hands thoroughly and then clean the wound. Stop the bleeding by applying gentle pressure with a clean cloth or gauze. Clean the wound with an antiseptic solution such as povidone-iodine. Cover the wound with a sterile bandage. Monitor the wound for signs of infection and change the bandage daily.

Online Resources for At-Home First Aid Training

- » **American Red Cross:** The Red Cross offers comprehensive online first aid courses. These won't provide certification, but they cover essential skills. <https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/first-aid/first-aid-training/first-aid-online>.

- » **American Red Cross YouTube Channel:** The Red Cross has a YouTube channel with clear and concise first aid tutorials. <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=9yQyt47anHE>
- » **National Safety Council:** The NSC offers First Aid eLearning, as well as instructions in CPR and AED usage. You may also engage in hands-on skills testing after taking an online course. <https://www.nsc.org/safety-training/first-aid/first-aid-online-training>
- » **American Heart Association:** The AHA has a plethora of training materials and videos online, as well as in-person courses for CPR, First Aid and more. <https://cpr.heart.org/en/>
- » **Mayo Clinic:** The Mayo Clinic has an extensive list of topics focused on information to help you during a medical emergency. Basic and advanced first aid is available online. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid>







Educate Yourself About At-Home First Aid

At-home first aid is all about being prepared to handle minor injuries and illnesses. Invest in a first aid kit and make sure it is easily accessible in your home. Once you learn a skill, practice it regularly with a friend or family member. Muscle memory is crucial in an emergency. While online resources are a great start, consider taking a formal in-person class in the future for a more complete experience. [IS](#)








Dos and Don'ts of Social Media Use from a Legal Perspective

by Louise Flourney

DO

-  Protect Client Confidentiality
-  Maintain Professionalism
-  Verify Facts
-  Be Aware of Jurisdictional Difference
-  Use Disclaimers
-  Keep Up with Legal Developments

DON'T

-  Share Confidential Info
-  Engage in Unprofessional Conduct
-  Provide Specific Legal Advice
-  Violate Advertising Rules
-  Ignore Intellectual Property Rights
-  Post Without Reviewing
-  Assume Privacy

Casey Devoti & Brockland Welcomes **Alexa Hillery** to the Firm

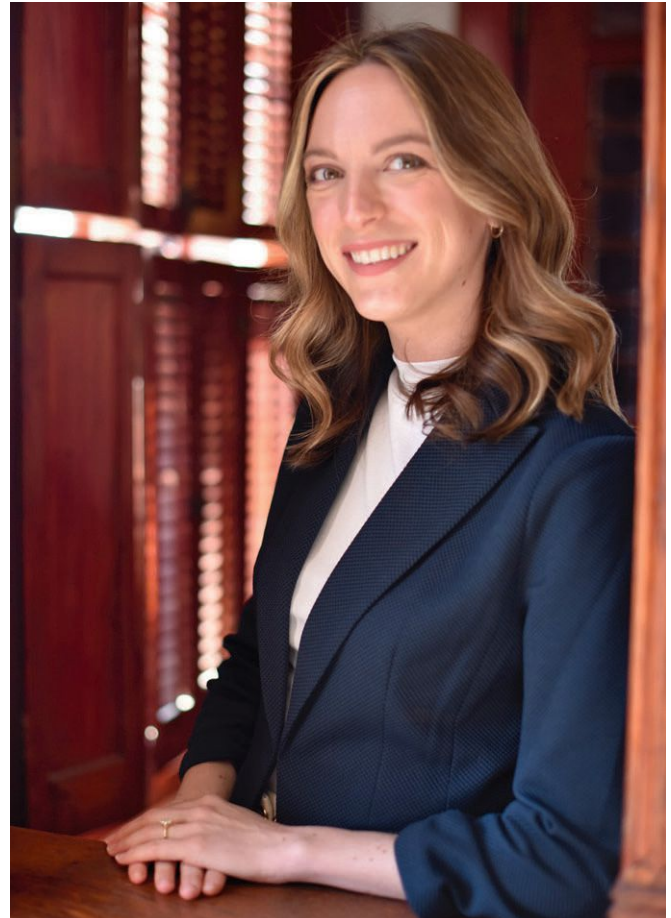
Alexa Hillery joined the firm this past April. Alexa is a skilled trial attorney who brings fresh eyes to Casey, Devoti & Brockland. Her unique blend of legal expertise, advocacy skills and empathetic counsel distinguishes her as a steadfast ally during challenging times.

Before joining Casey, Devoti & Brockland, Alexa worked as a Missouri State Public Defender. From 2017 to 2024, she was lead counsel on 13 jury trials. She built valuable expertise both inside and outside the courtroom by managing client cases, arguing motions and preparing cases to be submitted to the Missouri Court of Appeals and Missouri Supreme Court. Through this time, she learned to be a zealous advocate who thinks on her feet.

Clients describe Alexa as hardworking, detail-oriented and welcoming. More importantly, she is relentless in ensuring her client's voice is heard. Noting her previous experience in criminal law, Alexa tried a case with four co-defendants charged with two counts of first-degree murder and conspiracy. Through hard work and collaboration, three of them were found not guilty and one was found guilty of a lesser offense.

At Casey, Devoti & Brockland, her role will consist of legal research, writing and litigation. Alexa will work directly with clients and witnesses, taking depositions and attempting negotiations prior to filing a lawsuit.

Apart from her work at Casey, Devoti & Brockland, Alexa immerses herself in the broader legal community. She is a member of the Bar Association of Metropolitan St. Louis as well as the Women Lawyers' Association of Greater St. Louis. She currently resides in Clifton Heights with her fiancé, Luke, and their two dogs, Watson and Eleanor. ■



About the Firm

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The Casey, Devoti & Brockland partners are seasoned litigators who together have nearly 50 years of trial experience. Our three-attorney team offers a unique combination of accessibility and compassion—coupled with a fierce dedication to fighting for victim's rights.

We specialize in the following practice areas:

- Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Victims of Impaired and Distracted Drivers
- Medical Malpractice and Birth Injuries
- Slips, Trips & Falls
- Product Liability / Defective Devices
- Elder and Sexual Abuse
- Workers' Compensation
- Wrongful Death

We serve clients in the following areas:

- Greater St. Louis Metropolitan Area
- Southeastern Missouri
- Southern Illinois

If you have been the victim of negligence caused by another, you may be entitled to compensation for things like medical reimbursement, lost wages, pain and suffering.

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- Irritation of eye, skin and respiratory tract
- Headaches

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