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LOW-IMPACT CRASHES AND serious injuries

Insurance companies perpetuate the myth that, if a vehicle sustains little visible property damage in a “low-impact” collision, the occupants of that vehicle could not possibly sustain any serious injuries.

They know perfectly well, however, that low-impact collisions frequently cause significant damage to the people who were struck. When the bumper or fender of a car comes out relatively unscathed, it can indicate two things: there is damage beneath the visible surface, or that the impact energy was transferred somewhere else—usually to the occupants of the car. The heads and necks of passengers are more susceptible to G-forces from impact than the car itself.

Since the vehicle itself often does not begin to crush until impact speeds exceed 15 or 20 MPH, research indicates that significant forces are transmitted directly to and absorbed by the occupants in low speed impacts

Various studies also show that low-impact collisions create as much, or more, hyperextension of the cervical spine as high-impact collisions. Surprise rear-end collisions catch car occupants unaware, resulting in more

ligament tears. When

a person knows they are going to be hit, they will tense up the muscles and brace themselves, therefore injuring the muscles first. Muscles may get strained, but they often protect ligaments from more serious injury.

The bottom line is that, even at low rates of speed, victims of low-impact collisions are often subject to ligament, tendon, and muscle injuries. Occupants can also sustain herniated discs in their neck and back that result in pain, numbness, tingling and weakness into the upper and lower extremities. Injuries of this nature are frequently accompanied by sleep disturbances, memory problems, difficulty concentrating, and ringing in the ears.

The tricky aspect with injuries of this nature is that the symptoms do not always appear immediately. It may take days or even a couple of weeks for evidence of injury to present itself, and injuries may become chronic. It is critical to undergo a medical evaluation and not rush into any kind of insurance settlement with eager adjusters. ■



YELLOWSTONE'S supervolcano

A new study has revealed that there is enough hot molten rock under Yellowstone National Park to cause an eruption with 2,000 times the force of the 1980 Mount St. Helens blast in Washington state.

The magma chamber beneath Yellowstone is estimated to be a whopping 55 miles long, 18 miles wide and ranges from 3 to 9 miles below the Earth. That's twice as big as previously thought.

Researchers believe the amount of volcanic material there could lead to an eruption that would be on par with the largest the area has seen during the last 2.1 million years.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the most recent eruption at Yellowstone occurred around 640,000 years ago, and some observers have warned that it's overdue to erupt again.

Any large eruption would likely have major impacts – both in the U.S. and around the world. Scientists predict that huge amounts of ash and pulverized rock would be spewed into the atmosphere and fall slowly back down. Lingering volcanic material would block sunlight, leading to a decrease in global temperatures.

There is a good chance that scientists will know ahead of time if an eruption is about to happen since there are so many instruments in Yellowstone monitoring seismic activity.

Speaking of seismic activity, some researchers are of the mindset that a large earthquake is more likely to occur at Yellowstone than a volcanic eruption. Tragically, a 7.5-magnitude earthquake in 1959 at Hebgen Lake near Yellowstone killed 28 people. ■



oh, to be young again

The search for the elusive fountain of youth may be picking up steam.

Harvard researchers have discovered a new compound (produced naturally by young cells) that can seemingly re-energize and revive older cells.

As we age, our cells begin to break down and become less efficient at producing the energy needed to function, and eventually they stop working entirely. The main culprit: lack of oxygen.

But in a new study, researchers learned that by giving older mice a compound called NAD for just a short period of time, they could make 2-year-old mice tissue resemble that of 6-month-old mice. To put that in human perspective, it would be like making a 60-year-old's cells more like a 20-year-old's.

Over time, our level of NAD drops by as much as 50 percent; leaving us susceptible to common afflictions such as inflammation, muscle atrophy, and a metabolism that slows down more and more.

By reintroducing NAD to cells, researchers in essence trick the cell into believing it is young again and that its oxygen levels are normal, helping to jumpstart the cell.

The next step for researchers will be to introduce NAD into the drinking water of mice to see if it has any impact on how long it takes them to develop common conditions such as cancer and diabetes. In fact, the new potential treatment could become important for cancer research since tumors typically thrive in low-oxygen conditions and are more common in older people. ■

colonoscopy errors –

ARE THEY ALWAYS THE RESULT OF MEDICAL MALPRACTICE?

Colonoscopies are a critical tool in the early detection of colon cancer in people over the age of 50, and there's little doubt that the procedure has saved many lives.

But, as with any medical procedure, there are some inherent risks. For instance, some of the most common complications associated with colonoscopies are:

- Adverse reactions to the sedative or anesthesia used during the exam.
- Hemorrhaging (bleeding) from the site where a polyp or other abnormal tissue was removed.
- Tears or holes in the colon or rectum wall (bowel perforation).

Overall, it is estimated that the serious injury rate from colonoscopies is between 0.34 percent and 2.5 percent. That being said, most injuries from colonoscopies are **not** the result of medical malpractice.

There are instances, though, when an injury such as a bowel perforation can be considered medical

malpractice, such as when the doctor fails to admit that the perforation occurred, or if a patient doesn't receive the proper care to help correct the issue.

Other examples of potential colonoscopy medical malpractice can include:

- Lack of informed consent.
- Not recommending a colonoscopy when a patient presents with rectal bleeding or other symptoms that could signal colon cancer.
- Failure to timely diagnose or treat complications such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) during colonoscopies.
- Complications that arise from colonoscopies in which the doctor failed to inform the patient that he or she was at higher risk for potential problems.

If you or a loved one has suffered complications as a result of a colonoscopy, you should contact an experienced medical malpractice lawyer. ■

February 2014 Important Dates

February 1 – National Freedom Day February 2 – Groundhog Day February 2 – Super Bowl Sunday
February 14 – Valentine's Day February 17 – Presidents' Day

Did You Know?

The very first "chocolate box" was introduced by Richard Cadbury (yes, of the famous Cadbury family/chocolate company) in 1868 and featured a candy box decorated with a painting of his young daughter holding a kitten in her arms. Cadbury is also credited with inventing the first Valentine's Day candy box.

In a related note, the National Retail Federation estimates that Americans will spend nearly \$19 billion on Valentine's Day this year. We're guessing that Cadbury had no idea that Valentine's Day would become such big business! ■



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consumer safety alert –



CHILDREN'S LAMP RECALL

IKEA, in conjunction with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), has announced a recall for repair of children's wall-mounted lamps due to a strangulation hazard.

In separate incidents that both occurred in Europe, a 16-month-old child in a crib died after getting entangled in the lamp's cord and a 15-month-old child in a crib was nearly strangled after getting entangled. Both infants pulled the cord into their cribs.

According to the CPSC, 2.9 million of the recalled lamps were sold in the U.S., 1.1 million in Canada, and 23 million worldwide.

The recalled lamps are part of IKEA's children's SMILA-series wall-mounted lamps and were sold in eight different designs: a blue star, yellow moon, pink flower, white flower, red heart, green bug, blue seashell, and an orange seahorse.

Consumers are advised to immediately stop using the recalled lamp, contact IKEA for a free repair kit, and not use the lamp until the repair kit is installed. You can call IKEA toll-free at (888) 966-4532 anytime, or go to www.ikea-usa.com and click on the "Recall" link at the top of the page for more information about the lamp recall. ■

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