



A PARENT'S GUIDE TO KEEPING THEIR children safe this halloween

what's inside

page 2

Unintentional poisonings – Who's at risk?

Workers' compensation corner

page 3

Client spotlight

Check this out

page 4

Tiny electronic tattoos: The future of medical diagnostics?

Halloween is right around the corner and kids are already getting excited. It's a fun, memorable holiday – and let's keep it that way. When we were kids we all heard horror stories about creeps putting pins in apples to give to trick or treaters – which is why we all throw away anything that is not packaged or unwrapped.

Here are some helpful safety tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), to keep your little goblins, monsters and witches safe:



Find bright costumes. As most Trick-or-Treaters go out after dark, it's important that children can be seen easily, not only to be safe from vehicles, but so their parents can spot them easier should they become lost. Try reflective tape or trick-or-treat bags.



Pick safe accessories. Instead of masks, which make it hard to see, get non-toxic makeup, flame-resistant wigs or hats. Also, be careful of pointy or sharp accessories (you'd be surprised how many are) that will hurt if someone trips and falls.



Supervise. Parents should always chaperone their children while they're Trick-or-Treating. For older children, plan a route and a return time for them.



Porch light – check. Make sure children only approach homes with porch lights on, and never let them enter homes or cars for treats.



Be safe when walking. Stay in well-lit areas, using sidewalks and crosswalks when available. Always travel in groups and make sure everyone has flashlights with new batteries.



Inspect all candy. Don't allow kids to open or eat any candy or treats until it can be inspected by an adult. Halloween should be all about treats, trading candy with friends, and creative costumes. Let's keep it that way. And for more Halloween safety tips, please visit www.aap.org.

Halloween should be all about treats, friends, and great memories. Avoiding the common dangers associated with Trick-or-Treating is simple with the right guidance. For more Halloween safety tips, please visit www.aap.org. ■

UNINTENTIONAL POISONINGS – who's at risk?

I never thought much about accidental poisoning this until a few weeks ago when another dad told me his 6 year old son drank anti-freeze by mistake. It was left in a plastic bottle in the garage and the kid thought it was Gatorade. He's okay now – they rushed him to the hospital where they administered an antidote, but that's a lot for a little guy to go through.



But accidental poisonings are a serious problem in the U.S., and it's a problem that continues to get worse. Every day, over 80 people die from unintentional poisonings and nearly 2,000 are treated in emergency rooms. A poison is defined as any substance, including medication, that is harmful to a person if he or she inhales, consumes, injects, or absorbs too much of it. The reality is that almost any substance has the potential to be poisonous if too much is taken.

Most cases of poisoning in the United States are accidental or unintended. In fact, according to recent data, approximately three quarters of all poisoning deaths in America in 2007 were unintentional – only motor vehicle crash-fatalities accounted for more unintentional deaths. Of those unintentional poisoning deaths in 2007, almost all were caused by drugs. Those included pain medications, such as methadone, hydrocodone, and oxycodone, as well as drugs like heroin and cocaine. Other forms of poisons include household chemicals and carbon monoxide.

In addition to the terrible death and injury toll, the annual medical and productivity costs for poisonings can easily top \$30 billion.

Surprisingly, adults have the greatest risk of dying from unintentional poisoning. In fact, adults between the ages of 45 and 49 are most at risk, with men twice as likely to die from poisonings as women. Things aren't improving either – death rates for unintentional poisoning have been steadily rising since 1992.

So keep medications, especially narcotics, locked away and if there are young kids in the house, make sure household poisons are clearly labeled with those "Mr. Yuck" stickers and stored out of reach. ■

I was hurt working in a restaurant and get tips in addition to my regular wages. Are tips included in the average weekly wage and can I get workers comp benefits based on tips?

Answer: Absolutely – but you need to have a record of the tips you earned. Sometimes the restaurant or bar will keep a record in their point of sale or cash out sheets, but you should keep a separate record of all the tips you earn so you can prove your total income.

Occasionally, a worker will have a serious injury on the job in D.C., and was making a lot of money in tips but not reporting or declaring the tips. If that's the case, the workers comp benefits won't be based on the tips and there will be no way to realistically prove how much they actually earned – plus they may have problems with the IRS...

Remember, no matter what your occupation, the average weekly wage is fixed as of the date you get hurt at work in D.C. and you go back 6 months and include all income during that time – overtime, bonuses, salary, tips, etc. and average it. The higher the average, the higher the workers comp benefits you'll get when you can't work because of the injury. ■

client spotlight

We've had the privilege of representing Calvin Gray since 1997 when he got hurt driving a bus. And we were able to get justice for his young boys in a medical malpractice case when their mom passed away after a blood clot had been misdiagnosed. We've been there for the tough times but also the good times...

Calvin, a widower, went back to work as a bus driver. Fast forward to Valentine's Day 2002. Calvin is in his car following a bus driven by a fellow bus operator, Krystal Collins. He's honking and waving and the women passengers are yelling to Krystal "Bus driver, stop the bus! He's got candy! He wants you to pull over! It's Valentine's Day!"

Krystal pulled over. Calvin gave her the Valentine. And as they say, the rest is history... Married in 2008, Calvin and Krystal now share 5 kids and 6 grandkids. Calvin just retired and they are planning a cruise later this fall.

Krystal was also a client – and yes, our matchmaking service is complimentary.

The only downside to this great story – the poor husbands and boyfriends of all those women on the bus that day. You know they heard all about Calvin chasing down a city bus to give Krystal a Valentine. How can you compete with that? ■



Important Dates – October 2011

Oct 8 – Yom Kippur Oct 10 – Columbus Day Oct 16 – National Boss Day Oct 31 – Halloween

Check This Out:

Everyone has heard about the McDonald's hot coffee lawsuit where an Albuquerque woman sued McDonald's after she spilled coffee on herself. In fact, the insurance industry has convinced most people that the case is the prime example of a legal system out of control, where people are just out for a payday and willing to sue over just about anything. Unfortunately, we see jurors with this attitude in just about every case that goes to trial.

But do you know the real facts about what happened to Stella Liebeck? Do you know why her case got so much attention and who ultimately stood to profit from it? You might be shocked to learn the truth – both about what happened in her case and how it's been distorted.

Check out the brand new documentary film, *Hot Coffee*, to gain an entirely new perspective on this case and how insurance companies and their lobbyists have used it to convince people and politicians to take away the rights of Americans who have suffered serious, legitimate injuries through no fault of their own. The film will be available on DVD on November 1, 2011, and can currently be viewed on HBO On-Demand. For more details, check out www.HotCoffeeTheMovie.com. ■

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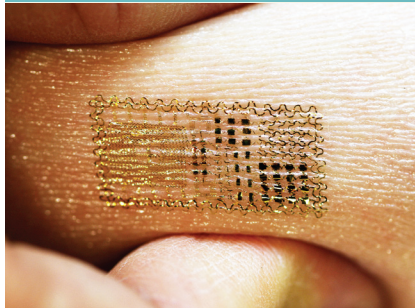
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unintentional poisonings



SEE PAGE TWO

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tiny electronic tattoos

THE FUTURE OF MEDICAL DIAGNOSTICS?

There's no question that doctors need diagnostic tools to provide safe medical care for their patients. As we've learned from many medical malpractice cases, diagnostic test results can be critical in making an accurate diagnosis of a life threatening condition.

While advancements in medical technology have made diagnostic tools far more efficient and accurate than ever before, there are still many drawbacks associated with them. In addition to the cost, most of today's diagnostic tools, machines and monitors are only used for patients in the hospital or some other medical facility. In other words, unless you're at the hospital, it's tough to monitor your health at any given moment.

That is, until now. According to a research team at the University

of Illinois, there may be a day in the not-too-distant future when tiny sensors can actually be worn by patients. Small, skin-mounted electronic patches – made of flexible, water-soluble plastic – may be the future of medical diagnostics. The patches potentially can be used as sensors for EEGs or EMGs, monitoring nerve and muscle activity.

Much like a temporary tattoo, the sensors are applied through water-based lamination onto the skin.

Besides added comfort, these sensors aren't confined to any one hospital or medical facility so a patient can be monitored at home. Other possible applications include research for sleep disorders, muscle disorders, and even neurological disorders. ■

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