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FEBRUARY/MARCH 2023

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SOAK UP THE SUNSHINE VITAMIN

Health Benefits of Vitamin D

With spring on the horizon, we all will be able to get outdoors a little more and soak up some sun — and extra vitamin D! Bring on the picnics, pool days, hiking, sports activities, and leisurely walks through the park!

Let's take a look at the many benefits this vitamin provides for our bodies.

It boosts your immune system.

Vitamin D helps your body fight off sickness. In fact, it's been proven that deficiencies in vitamin D are connected to an increased possibility of developing infections and autoimmune diseases such as the flu, heart disease, and diabetes.

It counters osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis, a loss in bone mass, is common as we get older. However, vitamin D is one of the key players in helping to slow down bone loss and

prevent or treat osteoporosis so we can maintain a healthy skeletal system.

It reduces the risks of depression.

Studies have shown that those who are deficient in vitamin D become more prone to mood disorders and depression. To ensure that you support your mental health, step outside and get some happy, feel-good rays!

It's possibly linked to weight loss.

While it's not fully proven that vitamin D helps with weight loss, many studies have found links between vitamin D supplements and shedding a few pounds. In one study, one group of people taking vitamin D and calcium supplements lost more weight than another group taking placebos.

It prevents and helps multiple sclerosis.

Not only is vitamin D proven to lower a person's chances of getting this horrible



disease, but for those who already have it, it can also reduce symptoms or slow down the disease's progression.

This spring, be sure to get outdoors and soak up some vitamin D; however, don't forget to protect your skin, too! To avoid overexposure, only about 10-15 minutes a day of unprotected sun is recommended.

WHO'S THE JUDGE?

And Who Decides the Facts

One cold morning just before Christmas, James and I were making our way through an elaborate security checkpoint just steps away from the Virginia statehouse. We were entering the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond to argue two separate cases in front of two panels of appellate judges. One case was being brought on behalf of a Myrtle Beach veterinarian whose Fourth Amendment right to be free from illegal arrest was violated, and the second case was brought on behalf of a Richland County high school student whose 14th Amendment right to bodily integrity was violated when she was sexually assaulted by a school resource officer. Given the local nature of our disputes, I thought about how and why we ended up in a queue outside the courthouse in Richmond.

The answer is somewhat convoluted, but it comes back to the question of who judges what? The first thing that any juror hears once they are sworn in is that the trial judge in the case will be the judge of the law, and the jurors will be the judge of the facts. That means the judge functions as a referee, deciding what evidence can be presented to the jury and what questions will be stricken from the record. However, the most important questions — such as which witnesses to believe and what actually happened in a dispute — are judged solely by the jurors.

In our state, we have three primary types of trial judges who hear a combination of civil and criminal cases (as opposed to our distinguished family court and probate judges who hear specialized matters). Magistrate/municipal/city judges make up the first type of trial judges, and they have limited jurisdiction. These judges can hear criminal cases involving misdemeanors carrying a jail term of less than 30 days and civil cases where the value in dispute is less than \$10,000 (typically thought of as "small claims court").

Circuit court judges have jurisdiction to hear felony criminal cases and civil cases where the subject matter of the case exceeds \$10,000. In our state, the party pressing the felony criminal charges is known as a solicitor (most states call

these prosecutors or district attorneys), who brings these charges on behalf of the state of South Carolina to enforce our state's laws. Circuit judges are the backbone of our state trial court system. Circuit judges are elected by the South Carolina Legislature to seven-year terms. If a party believes that a circuit court judge has made an error of law impacting a jury's verdict, that issue can be appealed to the South Carolina Court of Appeals and subsequently the South Carolina Supreme Court, which are both located in Columbia, South Carolina.



The federal equivalent to a South Carolina Circuit Court judge is a U.S. District Court judge, who serves as the backbone of the federal trial system. U.S. District Court judges hear federal criminal cases brought by prosecutors known as assistant U.S. attorneys, who press charges on behalf of the United States to enforce our nation's federal laws. District court judges also hear civil cases involving questions of federal law (such as cases involving the violation of constitutional rights) and certain high-dollar disputes involving parties of multiple states. U.S. District Court judges are appointed directly by the president of the United States and must be confirmed by the U.S. Senate. Once confirmed, these judges have a lifetime appointment. Appeals from the U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina are heard by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, which hears all appeals coming from the district courts for South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland — hence our road trip to defend the constitutional rights of our fellow citizens of South Carolina.

Despite the complexity and importance of the judiciary, the most important judge in the courtroom is always each individual member of the jury. Please keep that in mind the next time a jury duty summons arrives in the mail!



5 Feel-Good Movies

To Chase Away the Blues

Are you stuck in a TV rut and starting to feel down in the dumps? (Thanks, seasonal depression.) If so, check out one of these heartwarming movies for a pick-me-up.

1. **'Rescued by Ruby'** — If your family loves dogs, this kid-friendly flick will be a real crowd-pleaser. It stars a pup named Ruby, who starts life as a shelter dog. After a state trooper rescues her, she becomes a search-and-rescue worker who finds and saves people. A true story inspired the uplifting tale, and according to some reviews, you may want to have tissues ready.
2. **'Yes Day'** — Imagine spending an entire day saying “yes” to everything your kids requested. Congratulations: You’ve stepped into the plot of “Yes Day”! In this film, parents Alison and Carlos go along with their kids’ wildest desires and watch family bonding magic unfold. The Raising Children Network recommends this movie for adults and older kids only.
3. **'Chickenhare and the Hamster of Darkness'** — The plot of this animated movie is as creative as its title! It follows a cartoon hero named Chickenhare, who is 50% rabbit, 50% bird, and 100% confused about his place in the world. He’s also on a quest with friends to defeat his evil uncle before



it’s too late. Think of the film as a funny, adventurous, family-friendly take on the classic tale “The Ugly Duckling.”

4. **'Dumplin''** — Mashable called “Dumplin'” “the definition of sweet.” The movie stars Rosie (played by Jennifer Aniston) as a pageant-obsessed former beauty queen whose daughter, Willowdean, doesn’t fit conventional beauty standards. When Willowdean enters her mom’s pageant in a protest complete with dancing and Dolly Parton tunes, she sparks a small-town revolution. This movie is recommended for children ages 13 and up.
5. **'We Can Be Heroes'** — Since its release in 2020, this superhero movie has quickly become a family favorite. The story opens with an aliens-versus-superheroes showdown, and when the aliens win and take the heroes hostage, their kids come to the rescue. As the title implies, the film will leave you feeling like you can be a hero, too.

Understanding Traumatic Brain Injuries

Personal injury attorneys see devastating injuries daily, but some of the most tragic cases involve traumatic brain injury (TBI). Our brains control our speech, thoughts, emotions, and actions, so even a mild TBI should cause concern. In honor of Brain Injury Awareness Month in March, we want to share some important facts about TBIs.

Traumatic brain injuries occur when someone receives a blow or jolt to the head. TBIs can happen even when there’s no direct impact on the head; sudden stopping, as in a car accident, can cause injury to the brain as it jostles inside a person’s skull. Falls are the most common cause of brain injuries, followed by motor vehicle crashes. TBIs are also possible due to violence, sports injury, or proximity to an explosion.

Brain injuries fall on a spectrum. Concussions are generally mild, and symptoms usually resolve entirely in first-time instances. Repeated concussions, however, can cause permanent damage. Moderate to severe TBIs can cause lifelong disability or even death. Anyone who loses consciousness, even briefly, has suffered from a brain injury, but some people stay awake during concussions.

Symptoms of a TBI can take days or weeks to appear. The physical signs include headache, nausea, fatigue, dizziness, and difficulty with speech. Many people also experience mental or emotional problems like confusion, difficulty concentrating, depression, mood swings, and changes in sleep habits. Sensitivity to light, blurred vision, and ringing



in the ears are not uncommon, and people with severe TBIs can suffer from seizures.

Patients see the best outcomes when they seek medical attention quickly after the accident and when symptoms appear. But even with the best treatment, some TBIs can have long-term effects, including memory loss, mood changes, difficulty learning new tasks, and reduced language abilities. Rehabilitation programs often help restore function, but some people’s lives are changed forever.

Brain injuries are complex, and their effects can be far-reaching. It’s also frequently more difficult to adequately assess the appropriate level of compensation for TBIs than for other types of injuries. Therefore, you should retain a personal injury attorney experienced in brain injury cases as soon as possible after an accident. If you or someone you love has experienced a TBI due to someone else’s negligence, the attorneys at Evans Moore would be honored to provide a free, impartial assessment of your case.



Understanding and Celebrating the Equinox

The sun is out, trees are green again, and flowers are in bloom. These are all ways we know spring is here. The more analytical among us, though, may look to the calendar. The spring equinox falls on March 20, 2023, and officially marks the beginning of the season.

Most Americans know we have two equinoxes each year, one for fall and spring. We also have summer and winter solstices. But what do those days mean — and who decides when they’ll take place?

The word “equinox” comes from Latin and means “equal night,” and when it happens depends on the rotation of the earth’s axis. The sun sits above the equator on the two equinoxes, creating 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness. Each day will get progressively longer until the summer solstice when they gradually become shorter. The summer and winter solstices mark the longest and shortest days of sunlight each year.

While everyone around the world is affected by the equinox, we are not all affected equally. The spring equinox, also known as the vernal equinox, will only take place on March 20 for the Northern Hemisphere. In the Southern Hemisphere, the date will mark the fall equinox, and days will begin getting shorter. It happens because our planet is on a tilt; the equinoxes are the only two days of the year both hemispheres experience equal sunlight.

Since humans have long preferred brightness and warmer weather to darkness and cold, people have made the day a cause for celebration for centuries. The ancient Romans marked the day by honoring a fierce goddess, while the Shang Dynasty in China believed it was the day they were divinely called upon to rule their people. Persians long used the holiday to praise their religious leaders, while Iranians still celebrate it as their new year, Nowruz.

The spring equinox continues to hold significance in some faiths, but there are also secular ways to celebrate the day. You might use the equinox as a day to get outdoors or plant new life. Some people enjoy celebrating with a feast or bonfire. The equinox could also mark the beginning of your spring-cleaning! Whether or not you officially celebrate, we can all be glad for warmer days ahead.

TAKE A BREAK!

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SOLUTION ON PAGE 4



FETA CHICKEN BURGERS

Inspired by TasteOfHome.com

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup finely chopped cucumber
- 1/4 cup reduced-fat mayonnaise
- 1/2 tsp Greek seasoning
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 1 1/2 lbs lean ground chicken
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 6 whole wheat hamburger buns, split and toasted

Directions

1. Preheat broiler and mix chopped cucumber and mayonnaise.
2. For the burgers, mix the red pepper, garlic powder, Greek seasoning, and black pepper. Add chicken and cheese; mix lightly but thoroughly (the mixture will be sticky). Shape into 6 patties about 1/2-inch thick.
3. Broil burgers, remembering to cook both sides thoroughly. Serve on buns with cucumber sauce. If desired, top with lettuce and tomato. Enjoy!