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Summer Safety First

ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR ROAD TRIPS, BEACH DAYS, AND OUTDOOR FUN

June is one of my favorite months. The kids are finishing school, the grill is getting more use, and families everywhere are making plans for long-awaited vacations, beach trips, and weekends on the road. For our family, that usually means packing up for Breezy Point or heading to baseball tournaments across the tri-state area. It's a time for fun, freedom, and yes, a little bit of chaos.

But with all that activity comes the need for a little extra awareness. As a personal injury lawyer, I've seen firsthand how quickly a joyful day can take a turn if safety isn't top of mind. So, before you throw the beach chairs in the trunk or hit the highway, here are a few simple but important safety reminders to help your summer stay on track.

On the Road Again

Whether you're road-tripping to the Jersey Shore or just heading across town to a family barbecue, a safe vehicle is your first priority. Start with a basic vehicle check: tires properly inflated, oil changed, and

all fluids topped off. Don't forget that an emergency kit, jumper cables, a flashlight, water bottles, first-aid supplies, and a portable charger can make all the difference if something unexpected happens.

Also, make sure everyone buckles up, no exceptions. I know how tempting it is to let the kids unbuckle "just for a minute" when you're close to home, but accidents don't send warnings. And finally, take breaks if you're going long distances. A well-rested driver is a safer driver.

Beach Days Done Right

There's nothing like a beach day to hit the summer reset button. But a few smart choices can help you avoid injuries or emergencies.

Sunscreen is essential, even on cloudy days. Reapply often, especially after swimming. Dehydration sneaks up fast, too, especially for kids who are too busy building sandcastles to drink water. Pack more water than you think you'll need and encourage regular hydration breaks.

And while the ocean is beautiful, it demands respect. Always swim near a lifeguard, teach your kids about rip currents, and never assume someone else is watching. A moment of distraction can become a lifetime of regret.

Don't Forget Furry Family Members

Summer safety isn't just for humans; it's for our pets, too. Our dog Ranger is

part of the family, and he comes with us to Breezy Point every summer. With so many dog-loving residents in the community, it's common to see folks out walking their dogs early in the morning before the heat of the day sets in.

Hydration is key. Just like us, dogs need extra water in the summer. It can be easy to overlook, especially during long walks or outdoor outings. Make sure your pets always have access to fresh, cool water, and avoid walking them on hot pavement, which can burn their paws.

Also, keep dogs on leashes in public areas, no matter how friendly they may be. It helps prevent accidents and ensures everyone — humans and animals alike — can enjoy a safe outing. And here's an important reminder for families with young children: Always ask permission before allowing your child to pet someone else's dog. It's a simple courtesy that helps avoid surprises and potential dog bites.

A Little Planning Goes a Long Way

Summer is about making memories. But a few minutes of preparation can prevent those memories from turning into cautionary tales. So, whether you're setting out on a big road trip, hitting the beach, or just walking your dog at sunrise, remember, the best summer stories are the ones where everyone — two-legged and four-legged — gets home safe.

Wishing you a joyful, fun-filled, and safe summer season. Maybe we'll see you on the boardwalk — or the baseball field.

-Brian O'Connor



Turn Their Dreams Into Reality

What It Takes to Adopt a Child

Welcoming a new child into the family is one of the most exciting and life-changing events we can experience. While many Americans conceive with their significant other, others explore the world of adoption. According to the most recent Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System report, approximately 114,000 foster children are eligible and waiting to be adopted. By adopting a child, you give them a place to call home, a family who cares for them, and experiences they would never have had without you.

If you're interested in adopting a child, you're probably wondering what requirements you must meet to be eligible. Adoption is not a quick process: Domestic adoptions usually take up to two years to process, while international adoptions often take 2–5 years since you must follow American adoption rules and the guidelines of the child's home country. These rules are strict, as most countries do not want to place children in unsafe conditions. Here are five of the U.S.'s adoption requirements.

Age

Both prospective parents must be at least 21 to be eligible to adopt. While this is a minimum age requirement, there is no cutoff age, so even those in their golden years can consider adoption.

Health

You need to be there for your new child, especially as they adjust to their new home and environment, but you can't do that if you're battling a serious illness. Stable medical and emotional health are requirements for prospective adoptive parents. Those with a history of chronic illness or currently facing a serious condition must get a letter from their primary physician that states they are physically stable enough to raise the child until they turn 16. If one or both parents have a current or past psychiatric illness, you also need a doctor's statement assuring stability. All members of the household must prove they are physically and emotionally stable.

Criminal History

Having prior convictions does not immediately disqualify you but makes things much more difficult. All household members over age 18 must pass a child abuse clearance process. If you or another adult in the home has an arrest history, you must provide personal statements about the incident. Depending on the seriousness of the crime, you may be considered ineligible or require rehabilitation before moving forward.

Finances

Raising a child isn't cheap. According to the Institute of Family Studies, the expected cost of raising a child is \$202,248–\$430,928. There is no specified income requirement to be eligible to adopt, but you must prove you have the necessary resources to provide for the child. You should also consider other adoption costs, such as travel and adoption service fees.

Home Environment

An adopted child will spend ample time within your home, so the environment must be safe and accommodating to their needs. You must allow the agency to conduct a home study to ensure your house is safe and well-maintained. You may need to provide references that speak to your ability to care for and manage children. You should also be prepared to discuss your adoption and parenting plan.

Adopting a child is a serious decision you should not take lightly. If approved, you will be responsible for another human's life, development, and health. After you verify you meet all the requirements listed above, take some time to explore your state-specific requirements. The adoption process is complicated and sometimes disheartening, but stick with it. It will be one of the best decisions you make in your and your adopted child's lives!



TAKE A *BREAK*



Teriyaki Beef Skewers

Inspired by [AllRecipes.com](https://www.allrecipes.com)

This light, flavorful dish of tender, marinated beef slices can serve as a protein-rich appetizer or a tasty entree for a summer evening.

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup soy sauce
- 3 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 1/2 cup pineapple juice (optional)
- 4 lbs boneless round steak, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 1/2 cup water
- Bamboo skewers soaked in water

Directions

1. In a large bowl, whisk brown sugar, soy sauce, pineapple juice, water, vegetable oil, and garlic together. Drop beef slices into the mixture and stir to coat.
2. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and marinate in a refrigerator for 24 hours.
3. Remove beef from marinade, shaking to remove excess liquid.
4. Thread beef slices on skewers in a zig-zag pattern.
5. Preheat grill to medium heat and lightly oil the grate.
6. Cook beef skewers for about 3 minutes per side until the meat is cooked through.



Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, and the Art of Speaking Like an Aristocrat

There's a certain charm to old Hollywood movies — glamorous stars, sweeping orchestral scores, and, of course, that oddly posh, vaguely British way of speaking. You know the one. The voice makes Katharine Hepburn sound like she's perpetually midway through an important luncheon and Cary Grant appear to deliver a one-liner while also sipping afternoon tea. This isn't just a coincidence; it's the **Transatlantic accent**, and for a while, it was the gold standard of sophisticated speech.

Unlike normal regional dialects, the Transatlantic accent wasn't something people naturally developed by growing up in a particular area. It was an *acquired* accent drilled into the minds of upper-crust New Englanders at elite boarding schools and embraced by stage actors who wanted to sound refined. Essentially, it was the linguistic equivalent of wearing a tuxedo at all times.

Hollywood, never one to pass up a trend, adopted this cultivated accent in the early days of talkies. Why? Because it made actors sound polished, articulate, and, quite frankly, fancy. The crisp, clipped tones worked wonders for those speedy, back-and-forth screwball comedy exchanges. Just watch "His Girl Friday" and try not to be dazzled by the machine-gun dialogue between Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell!

And then, just as suddenly as it arrived, the Transatlantic accent packed its bags and vanished. By the 1950s, Hollywood started shifting away from aristocratic dramas and high-society stories, opting instead for gritty realism and everyday characters. The era of Marlon Brando and James Dean meant mumbling was in, and sounding like you vacationed on the French Riviera every summer was ... well, out.

Of course, we can still enjoy the legacy of the Transatlantic accent in classic films. Want to master it yourself? Pick up "Speak With Distinction" by Edith Skinner, the holy grail of old-school elocution training. Soon enough, you'll drop your R's, crisp your T's, and stretch your vowels until "dance" becomes "dahnce." After all, old Hollywood may be gone, but its impeccable enunciation will never go out of style.





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What Happened to Wendy Williams?

WENDY WILLIAMS FIGHTS FOR FREEDOM

Inside Her Battle for Control Over Her Life

When did you last hear Wendy Williams' iconic "How you doin'?" It's likely been a few years, and it's not because you didn't tune in to her daytime talk show. Actually, Williams hasn't filmed an episode of her talk show since 2022. It's not because she got tired of the responsibility or was taken off the air due to unpopularity. Williams effectively disappeared after an incident with Wells Fargo led to a court-appointed guardian taking over her financial affairs.

Williams learned that Wells Fargo had frozen her accounts after she attempted to make multiple large withdrawals from her bank account. Even more unsettling, her financial advisor, through Wells Fargo, notified the bank that Williams was of "unsound mind,"

which prompted a court-ordered guardianship. Initially, many believed this was solely a financial guardianship, but the Hollywood Reporter revealed that the court-appointed guardian was overseeing nearly everything in Williams' life.

So, how did Wendy Williams end up in this situation? In 2024, her care team disclosed that the talk show host had been diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia and aphasia. Information related to her situation came from various sources but nothing directly from Williams for many years. She has recently started taking phone interviews and making television appearances and has clearly disagreed with the situation since 2022.

Wendy Williams states she has been living in a memory unit in New York City for the past three years but does not think she belongs there. "Look, I don't belong here at all," stated Williams during a phone interview with "Nightline." "This is ridiculous."

Williams is actively fighting for her freedom, and one source even told ABC News that Williams' court-appointed attorney was planning to file a request to terminate the guardianship. The fact that she's getting opportunities to share her side of the story provides hope to her fans, but only time will tell how this will unravel.

