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## Driving Under the Influence of Cannabis

### Is Legal Marijuana Causing the Rise of Deadly Accidents?

In 2012, Colorado legalized marijuana for recreational use as part of Colorado Amendment 64. Previously, in 2000, marijuana was approved for medical use in the state, but it wasn't until Amendment 64 that the marijuana industry really took off.

Since then, the regulated industry has flourished in Colorado. People over the age of 21 can now easily and legally buy small amounts of cannabis. As of

2016, an individual can purchase up to 28 grams as part of one transaction, though there are many other legal specifics involved.

This also doesn't mean marijuana can be used without restraint. Some of the marijuana laws are based on laws related to the consumption of alcohol. That is to say, impaired driving is still illegal.

There are a growing number of reports indicating that marijuana-related car crashes are on the rise. For instance, the number of people who got into deadly accidents while marijuana was in their system more than doubled from 2013 to 2017.

Colorado has already seen a 40 percent spike in deadly car accidents across the board, leading people to search for answers as to why. In 2016, it was reported that 20 percent of all fatal crashes were related to marijuana consumption.

Of course, many people used marijuana before it was officially legalized, and some people likely got into deadly accidents while under the influence before Amendment 64. But does the data suggest that legalization itself — the process of making it easier to buy marijuana and increasing the number of people using it — has led to more deadly accidents?

Some would argue that's exactly what the data shows. Others argue that the results of marijuana-related accidents cannot be truly compared to alcohol-related DUIs. When a person tests positive for alcohol and they are above the legal limit, the

alcohol is impairing that person at the moment of testing.

Marijuana, on the other hand, can stay in a person's system for far longer. A person could have smoked or consumed marijuana a week (or longer) before, and they could still test positive — despite not being high during the accident.

Because of this, the marijuana may not have had any impact on the person's driving ability. The substance may be more commonly found in people's systems because its use is now more widespread. A person could have used it safely at home long before operating a vehicle.

The accident statistics from the past few years bring up a lot of interesting questions about marijuana legalization and driving fatalities. It's clearly a nuanced issue and not easily resolved. We can say for sure that legalization has been great for state taxes, but public safety is a completely different matter.

Regardless, it's important to stay safe and partake in marijuana-related activities in a responsible manner. It comes down to using common sense. Like drinking and driving, you should never smoke and drive.

If you or a loved one has been involved in a car accident, marijuana-related or otherwise, give us a call. We will do everything we can to help.

*Bryan VanMeveren*



# The Most Underrated Thanksgiving Foods

## 4 Dishes Your Table Needs

When you think of Thanksgiving food, the first dishes that pop into your mind are probably turkey, mashed potatoes, and green bean casserole. They're a part of nearly every Thanksgiving meal. And while these delicious foods are something you don't want to skip, there are dishes your table is sorely missing — dishes that don't get the respect they truly deserve. This Thanksgiving, why not take a look at a few other options?

**Soup** This is one dish that rarely hits the Thanksgiving table. But try a butternut squash or broccoli cheddar soup and you'll be surprised just how "at home" it feels among the rest of your spread. It's



perfect to serve ahead of the main course, as the final touches are put on the turkey, or when the green bean casserole needs a few more minutes in the oven.

**Brussels Sprouts** These tiny greens often get overlooked during Thanksgiving, but with the right accompaniment, they can make for an extremely tasty and nutritious dish. For example, try roasting halved Brussels sprouts with dried cranberries and bacon, drizzled with a raspberry balsamic vinaigrette.

**Sausage** Put a creative spin on your traditional Thanksgiving dishes and try using sausage in the stuffing. An Italian sausage, for instance, adds a kick of flavor to any stuffing, homemade or from the box. You

can also experiment with other kinds of sausage to find the flavors that best complement your stuffing. Use a sweet sausage when you need something to pair with a stuffing that incorporates apples.

**Cranberry Sauce** This Thanksgiving staple rarely gets the attention it deserves. While it's easy to buy a can of cranberry sauce, you do your guests a culinary disservice by going this route. Instead, make your own cranberry sauce. There are many recipes online, and all you need are some fresh or frozen cranberries, orange juice, and sugar to make the best cranberry sauce of your life.



## What Clients Are Saying About Us

### Don't Just Take Our Word for It

“

Mr. Bryan VanMeveren represented me in an auto accident lawsuit. My case was very difficult, complex, and challenging, and it took about 1 1/2 years to bring to a satisfactory conclusion. Being an extremely stressful time for me, I appreciated his patience, understanding,

and keeping me informed of the status of my case. Bryan represents excellence in professionalism, knowledge, ethics, high morals, and providing personal attention. I highly recommend Bryan VanMeveren and the entire VanMeveren Law Group.”



-Dee



-Linnet

”

# By Way of Laramie

## Meet Legal Assistant **Andrea Harokopis**

Andrea Harokopis has been a legal assistant with the firm since May of 2017. She joined our team after moving from Laramie, Wyoming, which is known to some as "the land of the wind." Here, Andrea had been working with another law firm as an interpreter before she ultimately transferred to the role of legal assistant.

As a legal assistant, Andrea appreciates how every day is different; there's never a dull moment at VanMeveren Law Group. She works directly with many of our clients and folks who call us with questions or concerns related to their case.

Why did she move to Fort Collins? According to Andrea, there's simply a lot more to do — from outdoor activities and nightlife to, well, just about everything.

Outdoor adventures are particularly important to Andrea. She loves hiking and camping — two of Fort Collins' most popular pastimes — as well as traveling in general. Just this past February, Andrea took a lively trip to Mexico. Of course, when she just wants to chill after a day of work, Andrea likes to simply curl up with her cat.

With Thanksgiving coming up this month, Andrea is looking forward to heading back home to her parents' place in Laramie. It's a pretty low-key affair, but all of Andrea's favorite Thanksgiving dishes will be on the table.

Hopefully Andrea has a wonderful Thanksgiving, because the rest of us at VanMeveren Law Group know how hard she works and how much she deserves a restful holiday.



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## Chipotle-Roasted Carrot Salad

### Ingredients

- 30 small carrots (2-3 bunches), tops removed and carrots scrubbed
- 2 chipotle peppers in adobo, minced
- 1 teaspoon adobo sauce from the chipotle can
- 1 tablespoon molasses
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 ounces watercress, stems trimmed
- Plain Greek yogurt, for serving
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste

### Directions

1. Heat oven to 350 F. In a rimmed baking sheet, toss carrots with chipotle peppers, molasses, and olive oil. Season with salt and pepper, and roast for 30-35 minutes.
2. Transfer carrots to a plate and let them cool completely.
3. Once cooled, toss carrots with adobo sauce. Lay across a platter, and top with watercress.
4. Serve alongside yogurt.

Inspired by Food & Wine magazine



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# Give Thanks With These 3 Events

### The Dinner Detective

When: Saturday, Nov. 24

Where: Hilton Fort Collins

It's a four-course dinner mixed with a murder mystery! Are you seated next to another guest — or a performer? As you dine, everyone at the table becomes a suspect, and that includes you. Between each course, more of the story unravels with twists and clues. Work alone or together to complete the "whodunit" puzzle. There's even a prize at the end for the star sleuth. Visit [TheDinnerDetective.com/fort-collins/tickets-showtimes](http://TheDinnerDetective.com/fort-collins/tickets-showtimes) for more information.

### The Nutcracker

When: Friday–Sunday, Dec. 7–9

Where: The Lincoln Center

Kick off your December by getting in a festive mood with the 37th annual performance of *The Nutcracker*. Presented by Canyon Concert Ballet,

with Tchaikovsky's score performed by the Fort Collins Symphony Orchestra, it's a treat for the eyes and ears. Watch as the imaginative world of young Clara comes to life with toy soldiers, dolls, and so much more. For times and tickets, visit [LCTix.com/nutcracker-37th-annual](http://LCTix.com/nutcracker-37th-annual).

### Sweaty Sweater Race

When: Saturday, Dec. 8

Where: Anheuser-Busch Brewery

It's time to dig your ugly sweaters out of storage. The Sweaty Sweater Race is set for the second Saturday in December. It's a 4-mile run and walk. Same-day registration begins at 8 a.m., and the race kicks off at 9. It's an event for the whole family, but those 21 and older will be able to purchase beer in addition to hot chocolate and coffee. As is tradition, the ugly sweater contest is held after the race at 10:30 a.m. For more information and to register, see [FrontRangeFreeze.com/sweaty-sweater-race](http://FrontRangeFreeze.com/sweaty-sweater-race).

