

# Health & Science

## New Method Of Breast Reconstruction Studied

Stimulating fat cells to grow in a dome-shaped implant might someday offer a potential new approach to breast reconstruction.

Plastic surgeons at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston are experimenting with this technique for use in breast-cancer patients in hopes that it will have fewer risks than current methods of breast reconstruction following a mastectomy.

The implant is made of biodegradable polymers and serves as a temporary "scaffolding" to provide shape for the body's fat cells.

It dissolves within two to three months as body tissue, including

fat cells, fills in the area.

Chemicals known as growth factors are added to the cells to help generate more fat tissue. Growth factors stimulate cells to multiply and mature.

Dr. Eser Yuksel, a Baylor plastic surgeon who is studying this technique in animals, said this approach could have several advantages.

"Currently, breast reconstruction in cancer patients usually requires transferring tissue from the abdomen or the back to the chest," Yuksel said. "But their's a risk of tissue scarring, and it is difficult to restore the volume, shape, size, texture and blood supply of a normal breast."

Because the new approach relies on the body to generate its own tissue, scarring should not be a problem, and the breast should look and feel normal, Yuksel said.

So far the researchers have been able to grow the fat cells, but further studies are needed to observe whether the cells fill out the scaffolding as expected.

Other Baylor researchers working with Yuksel on this study are Brad Ray, Adam Weinfeld, and Drs. Jacob Waugh, John Jensen, Melvin Spira and Saleh Shenaq, who heads the division of Plastic Surgery.

They are collaborating with scientists at Rice University.

## FDA Clears New Drug to Reduce Need for Prostate Surgery

Merck & Co. Inc., announced today that, after a six-month review, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has cleared Proscar (finasteride 5 mg) as the first and only medication to reduce the need for prostate surgery and the risk of developing acute urinary retention, a serious and painful complication of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH). BPH is a common condition that affects more than half of men age 60 and older, and prostate surgery to correct it is the second most commonly performed surgery on older men.

The expanded indication is based on the results of the landmark PLESS study (Proscar Long-term Efficacy and Safety Study), the largest and longest controlled

clinical trial of men ever completed in urology. PLESS was recently published *New England Journal of Medicine*.

Two other studies of Proscar are ongoing. The National Cancer Institute is conducting the Prostate Cancer Prevention Trial to determine if Proscar reduces the risk of prostate cancer. The study includes 18,000 patients from 222 trial sites across the country.

In addition, the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases is conducting a five year study of Proscar, doxazosin and a combination of the two therapies. This study of 2,800 patients will monitor the progression of BPH as measured



by the need for surgery and changes in prostate tissue.

Merck & Co. Inc., is a leading research driven pharmaceutical products and services company. Merck discovers, develops, manufactures and markets a broad range of innovative products to improve human and animal health.

## 1995 Health Stats Released

The Oregon Vital Statistics Annual Report 1995, containing death, infant death and adolescent suicide attempt information for 1995 has been released by the Oregon Health Division. Analysis of trend data, current county data and a comparison of Oregon to the nation is included in the report. Some highlights:

•A total of 28,190 Oregonians died during 1995, an average of one death every 19 minutes.

•During 1995, the state's crude death rate were heart disease (7,529 deaths), cancer (6,824), cerebrovascular disease (2,483), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (1,460), and unintentional injuries (1,293).

•Large increases occurred in death rates for Parkinson's disease (up 17%) and Alzheimer's disease (up 13%). Both rates reached record

highs, 22.0 per 100,000 population for Parkinson's and 7.4 per 100,000 population for Alzheimer's.

•During 1995, 439 Oregonians died from intentional and unintentional gunshot wounds. Injuries from handguns (243) accounted for most of the fatalities.

•During 1995, 262 infants died. This is the first time since 1992 that the infant death rate has declined, falling to a record low (6.1 per 1,000 live births).

•Over half of youth suicide attempts (55%) were possibly or definitely life threatening. The most common reasons given were: family discord (63%), argument with a boy/girlfriend (26%), and school problems (22%).

•Most youth suicide deaths (65%) resulted from gunshot wounds.

MJCC Center Fit Presents

## Health Festival 1998

Want to get fit and healthy? Come on down to the Mittleman Jewish Community Center Health Festival 1998! The Festival, for adults age 50 and over, will be held on Thursday, May 28 from 10:00 AM until 6:00 PM. This free event will feature over twenty services including Vision Testing, Body Composition Testing, Glasses Adjustment, Blood Pressure Checking, Massage, Glucose Testing, Cholesterol Screening and much more. Other exciting events at the Health Festival are a Mini Golf Tournament, Exercise Classes, Basketball Shooting, Dancing, Ping Pong, Darts, Cardio Equipment Demos, Tai Chi Workshops plus a lot more. Door prizes

and prizes for the tournaments will be given.

Health Festival 1998 is sponsored by the Center Fit program of the MJCC. Center Fit is a health and wellness program for adults age 50 and over. Center Fit offers classes in fitness, aerobics, dance, and weight training plus a variety of special interest workshops.

The Mittleman Jewish Community Center is located at 6651 SW Capitol Hwy. in Portland. You can also get to the MJCC on Tri-Met buses #1, #5 and #45. For more information on Health Festival 1998 or the Center Fit program call Maria Bennett at 244-0111.

## Share The Road Safely With Trucks

In observance of National Drive Safely at Work Week April 20-24, we'd like drivers to consider the following issue. The size and weight of trucks and other large vehicles limit their maneuverability and create large blind spots. So, along with cars, bicycles, pedestrians and motorcycles, learn to share the road safely with trucks and buses.

### Did you know?

\*Trucks carry 78% of the freight in this nation. If you got it, a truck probably brought it.

\*According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, out of the 300,000 crashes in 1995 involving trucks and passenger vehicles, in at least 70% of the crashes of passenger vehicle driver contributed to the crash.

\*A recent survey determined that 80% of the public has a positive view of truck drivers.

### Truck Facts

\*Trucks take longer to stop. A car traveling 55 mph can stop in about 130 to 140 feet. A truck traveling at the same speed takes 400 feet to stop.

\*Trucks have deep blind spots in front, behind and on both sides.

\*Trucks need room to make right turns. With any turning vehicle, the rear wheels follow a shorter path than the front wheels. The longer the vehicle, the greater the difference.

\*Trucks must swing wide to the left to safely negotiate a right turn. They cannot see cars behind or beside them.

### Safety Tips

\*Following a truck too closely greatly increases the chances of a rear-end collision. When your car is behind a truck, the driver can't see it and it severely limits what you can see on the road ahead.

\*You increase the chances for a crash the longer you drive in the side blind spots of trucks. A good rule of thumb is, if you can't see the truck driver in his/her mirror, he or she can't see you.

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Premium  
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## Secure Horizons holds the line on premiums.

For the third straight year, the monthly premium for the Secure Horizons Medicare health plan will stay at \$0 throughout 1998, for members living in Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas, Yamhill, and Columbia counties. Which is enough to make anyone who's concerned about rising health plan premiums *very* happy.

### Great providers and benefits.

Also for 1998, Secure Horizons offers a wide choice of physicians, a package of benefits and services, including:

- Personalized care from a choice of well-established community physicians (chances are, your current doctor may already be in our network)
- Our network includes virtually all local hospitals
- No deductibles, no claim forms, no paperwork when using contracting providers
- Unlimited office visits with contracting physicians (\$10 copayment)
- Discounts on dental, alternative and chiropractic care, hearing aids, and prescription drugs
- Preventive and wellness services covered

Questions? Call 1-800-728-8158 (TTY 1-800-257-5799)

Secure Horizons is offered by PacifiCare which is a federally qualified HMO with a Medicare contract. Anyone with Medicare may apply. Members must use contracting plan providers. Plan premiums and benefits vary by county. Beneficiaries must continue to pay Part B premium or Medicare premium.

### Learn more at a free presentation.

Find out more about our plan by calling 1-800-728-8158. Or plan now to attend one of our presentations. You'll discover that Secure Horizons is part of the largest Medicare health plan in America, and a respected health care leader.

### May Secure Horizons Presentations

**HealthFirst Medical Group - Broadway**  
Conference Room  
265 N. Broadway, Portland  
Wednesday, May 13  
10:00 a.m.

**Woodland Park Hospital**  
Auditorium  
10300 N.E. Hancock, Portland  
Wednesday, May 13  
2:30 p.m.

### Refreshments will be served.

A sales representative will be present with information and applications. These locations are wheelchair accessible. Please let us know at least 72 hours in advance if you have special needs.

**SecureHorizons®**  
Offered by PacifiCare of Oregon