

Glue Enables Early Walking On Fractured Leg

Washington (Science Service) — A splash of glue, three days setting time, and you can walk out of the hospital on a fractured leg.

The bone glue that makes this rapid recovery possible is being tried out at medical schools and hospitals throughout the United States and Canada.

The broken bones of about 250 trial patients have been glued together in the past three years. Had these people undergone conventional treatment for fractures, they might have spent up to six months in plaster casts, either bedridden or stumbling along on crutches.

Plastic Foam

Tougher than bone itself, the glue is a plastic polyurethane foam that becomes rigid as it dries.

For surgical use, the glue is provided in a sterile kit containing two jars of yellowish viscous fluids and a wire beater. The fluids — a polyurethane and a catalyst — are mixed and beaten, and the fast-drying foam is formed.

It was developed by Dr. Michael P. Mandarino, Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital of Philadelphia, in cooperation with the Wm. S. Merrell Company, Cincinnati, Ohio, a drug firm.

Dr. Mandarino said that after he first got the idea for a bone glue he spent months combing chemical journals for a practical adhesive substance. He found it in the plastic foam.

Bone Exposed

Surgical gluing techniques are still under development. But, in general, this is how a fracture is treated with the glue:

The bone is exposed and little plugs of bone are removed from each of the broken ends. Plastic foam is poured on the ends. The plugs are replaced in such a way that the two ends of the bone dovetail. After a few hours of immobility, while the glue stiffens, the repaired limb can be moved.

Dr. Mandarino, an orthopedic surgeon, said normal bone eventually grows through the glue and in about a year the ends join. During this time, the glue is absorbed and completely disappears.

Called "Ostamer," the glue will not be distributed for general use until clinical trials provide sufficient proof of its utility.

Loaned Uranium Placed in Barrel

Haverford, Pa. — (UPI) — The Atom Energy Commission loaned Haverford college \$100,000 worth of uranium, and what did they do with it? They put it in an old wooden olive barrel.

It should be mentioned, though, that with the addition of a few other items, Haverford soon had an atomic reactor. Technically, the device is known as a "subcritical" uranium reactor, which means it is capable of producing fission at a safe rate only.

Here's what the boys at Haverford did: They placed uranium-filled tubing in the barrel and filled it with water. Then a mixture of plutonium and beryllium in a very small cylindrical box was placed in the water, producing fission.

Dr. Aaron Lemonick, head of the school's physics department, says the idea is to give students direct experience with problems and techniques of nuclear fission reactors.

But why an old wooden barrel?

Dr. Lemonick admitted there are special metal barrels made for just such purposes — at about \$2,000 each. But Haverford's old olive barrel, the professor said, cost \$1,990 less, and it does the job.

Shredded Redwood Bark Aids Shippers

Richmond, Calif. — (UPI) — Shredded bark from California's famed redwood trees may be the newest thing in long haul fruit shipping.

Shippers now use pulverized cork as a pack in which to ship grapes and other soft-skinned fruits. But University of California researchers believe the residue of redwood trees can serve the purpose of protecting boxed fruit from bruises.

Seattle — (UPI) — Fred Devine Salvage Co., Portland, Ore., has begun operations in an attempt to raise the 85-foot ship Cape Douglas which sank last December near Point Pulley, southeast of here.

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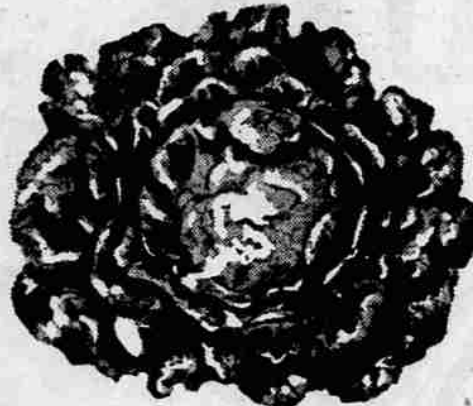
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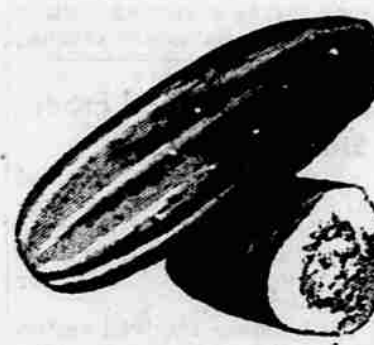
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