



The Cutting Edge

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Missile Knowledge to Fight Breast Cancer

Defence technology used to shoot down nuclear missiles could be used to treat thousands of women with breast cancer, a US army specialist says. Senior army surgeon Colonel Craig Shriver told a conference of Australian surgeons on Monday that US researchers had begun trialling defence software as a less painful and disfiguring way of removing cancerous tumours in the breast. The US Department of Defence has funded research into the new technique, which Dr Shriver says could dramatically improve surgical approaches to breast cancer treatment. (AAP – May 12, 2008)

<http://news.theage.com.au/world/missile-knowledge-to-fight-breast-cancer-20080512-2dav.html>

Similar Outcomes for Minimally Invasive, Open Surgery in Colon Cancer

Large, open incisions that cause pain and require lengthy healing times might be unnecessary to treat colorectal cancer patients successfully, according to a new review of studies. "For a long time, many surgeons have been afraid that laparoscopy might impair survival in colorectal cancer patients and cause metastases in the skin openings that are used to insert the instruments, but this has proven not to be the case," said lead reviewer Esther Kuhry, M.D., a general surgery resident at Namsos Hospital in Norway. Colorectal cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in the United States. According to the National Cancer Institute, there will be 148,810 new diagnoses of colorectal cancer in 2008. (The Cochrane Collaboration – May 6, 2008)

<http://www.newswise.com/articles/view/540459/?sc=rsmn>

**Body Contouring Surgery Improves**

For patients who lose massive amounts of weight -- 100 pounds or more -- the battle isn't over once they reach their goal weight. They're left with hanging skin and excess fat and may opt for body contouring surgery, which can include multiple operations. The procedures have improved as surgeons have gained experience, learned when to combine liposuction and excision, and learned how to reduce complications, say surgeons who spoke at a panel on body contouring surgery at the annual meeting of the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery in San Diego. (WebMD – May 9, 2008)

http://www.webmd.com/skin-beauty/news/20080508/body-countouring-surgery-improves?src=RSS_PUBLIC

Docs List Who Would be Allowed to Die in a Catastrophe

Doctors know some patients needing lifesaving care won't get it in a flu pandemic or other disaster. The gut-wrenching dilemma will be deciding whom to let die. Now, an influential group of physicians has drafted a grimly specific list of recommendations for which patients wouldn't be treated. They include the very elderly, seriously hurt trauma victims, severely burned patients and those with severe dementia. The suggested list was compiled by a task force whose members come from prestigious universities, medical groups, the military and government agencies. They include the Department of Homeland Security, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Department of Health and Human Services.

(Associated Press – May 5, 2008)

<http://www.cnn.com/2008/HEALTH/05/05/pandemic.rationing.ap/index.html>

New Hip Patients Get a Squeak in Their Step

The first time John Johnson's artificial hip squeaked, he was bending down to pick up a pine cone in his yard. He looked up, expecting to find an animal nearby. Susan O'Toole, a nutritionist in the Bronx, who first squeaked going up stairs after getting home from her hip-replacement surgery in 2005, said she thought the banister she was gripping needed repair. Both patients — and hundreds of others — discovered once they pinpointed the source of the noises, they had become guinea pigs in an unfolding medical mystery. Their artificial hips are made of ceramic materials that were promoted as being much more durable than older models. But for reasons not yet fully understood, their hips started to squeak, raising questions about whether the noises herald more serious malfunctions. (The New York Times – May 11, 2008)

http://origin.denverpost.com/breakingnews/ci_9219081

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