

Briefly

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Ultrasound

NEW METHOD DETECTS

CANCER, HEART DISEASE

A new ultrasound technique may detect early signs of heart disease and breast cancer. Ultrasound-Stimulated Vibro-Acoustic Spectrography was developed by two Mayo Clinic researchers. The early stages of calcium buildup in the arteries and tiny calcified points of tissue that develop into breast tumours vibrate at a different frequency from surrounding soft tissue.

The technique could eliminate the need for x-rays and other expensive diagnostic medical procedures, says researcher Mostafa Fatemi. ``This is a non-invasive, simple and low-cost method.''

Marijuana

TROUBLED TEENS ADDICTED

Troubled teenagers who use marijuana can quickly become addicted to the drug, according to a University of Colorado study published in the journal Drug And Alcohol Dependence. Some 165 boys and 64 girls ages 13 to 19 were studied. More than 80 per cent of the boys and 60 per cent of the girls were clinically dependent on marijuana. Some 85 per cent of the teens admitted their habit interfered with driving, school, work and home life.

Golfer's spine

LOWER BACK INJURED

The powerful twisting motion in some golfers' swings may eventually deform bones in the lower back, leading to what researchers call golfer's spine. ``A combination of how the spine twists and how it bends to the side'' is to blame for this sports injury, explains Scott Banks of the Orthopedic Research Laboratory of Good Samaritan Medical Centre in West Palm Beach, Fla.

Infants

WATER DAMAGE DANGEROUS

Severe water damage in a home can lead to bleeding lungs in infants, U.S. pediatricians warn. Water damage in wood, wallpaper, ceiling tiles and paper products sometimes give rise to a toxic mould called stachybotrys, which can attack the growing lungs of infants. The condition is rare. The bleeding typically shows up in the nose or mouth, and can be fatal if the baby is not treated quickly enough or is exposed again to the moulds.

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