

by Scott LaFee

MEDTRONICA

Our bodies, Ourselves

www.ourbodiesourselves.org

From the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, a Web site companion to the classic book "Our Bodies, Ourselves," with clinical and psychosocial information about women's health issues in both English and Spanish.

BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

YA THINK? - A Johns Hopkins University survey of surgeons, anesthesiologists and nurses concludes that a brief, mandatory 'team meeting' before surgery would go a long way toward making sure the right patient is operated on for the right reason. CNS Photo. MEDTRONICA - The Boston Women's Health Book Collective Web site at www.ourbodiesourselves.org offers clinical and psychological information about women's health issues in both English and Spanish. CNS Photo.If you took all the human urine produced in the world in one day, it would take a full 20 minutes for it to flow over Niagara Falls.

GET ME THAT. STAT!

The Centers for Disease Control says the number of American women ages 40 and older who get mammograms to screen for breast cancer is dropping, from 76.4 percent in 2000 to 74.6 percent in 2005.

If the trend continues, the CDC warns, the percentage of American women who contract breast cancer is likely to rise.

PHOBIA OF THE WEEK

Eosophobia - fear of dawn

BEST MEDICINE

After his physical, Mr. Smith sat down with his doctor.

"You really need to do something about your weight," said the doctor.

"Oh, I've tried," replied Mr. Smith, "but nothing works. I must have an overactive thyroid."

The doctor shook his head.

"Mr. Smith, if anything's overactive, it's your fork."

YA THINK?

A Johns Hopkins University survey of doctors, anesthesiologists and nurses concludes that a brief, mandatory "team meeting" before surgery would go a long way toward making sure the right patient is operated on for the right reason.

So-called "wrong-site" surgeries occur about once in every 112,994 operations nationwide, according to a 2006 paper published in the Archives of Surgery. That's still pretty rare, said Dr. Martin Makery, who conducted the Johns Hopkins study. On the other hand, he notes, these kinds of mistakes are entirely preventable.

TODAY'S SAFETY TIP

Food-borne illness afflicts at least 6 million Americans annually, causing at least 9,000 deaths and as much as \$6 billion in medical costs and other expenses.

And your kitchen may be a primary source of contamination, a home to all sorts of pathogens lurking in uncooked eggs, meats and vegetables. Many of these microbial menaces find their way onto countertops, utensils and, ultimately, the kitchen sink sponge or dishcloth.

Researchers at the University of Florida have this suggestion: Microwave them. Two minutes in the microwave at full power kills or inactivates 99 percent of the pathogens commonly found in a kitchen, said Gabriel Bitton, a professor of environmental engineering.

It's not the radiation that's deadly, but the generated heat, so make sure the sponge is thoroughly sodden. (This also reduces the chance your sponge will burst into flames.) Bitton recommends microwaving kitchen sponges every other day - daily if you cook a lot.

OBSERVATION

"A drug is that substance which, when injected into a rat, will produce a scientific report."

- Author unknown

LAST WORDS

Some dying utterances are cryptic and fraught with mystery, while others ask questions more to the point. Take Paul Claudel (1868-1955), a French poet best known for verse dramas, whose themes were often faith-based: "Doctor, do you think it could have been the sausage?"