

HOW GM CAN FIX ITSELF ■ THE NFL MANNINGS: LIKE FATHER, LIKE SONS

TIME

SPECIAL ISSUE

THE YEAR IN

MEDICINE

FROM A^{TO}Z



- NEW FINDINGS ON ALZHEIMER'S
- A VACCINE FOR CERVICAL CANCER
- CLONING SCANDAL
- THE NEW FOOD PYRAMID

RITA MAAS—GETTY

regularly taking medicines like Lipitor, Lescol, Pravachol and Zocor may halve a patient's risk of developing colon and advanced prostate cancers while reducing their risk of pancreatic and esophageal cancers more than 50%. Another study showed that patients who aren't on statins can cut their risk of death following a heart attack more than 50% if they take them before hospitalization and within 24 hours after the attack. Doctors think the cholesterol- and inflammation-reducing effects of the drugs may even help Alzheimer's patients; in a three-year study published in the *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery & Psychiatry*, statins appeared to slow the progress of the disease.

STEM CELLS

Before admitting to ethical lapses last week, the same Korean researcher who created Snuppy the cloned puppy (see "Cloning") shocked Western scientists by producing 11 custom-made human-stem-cell lines from the cloned skin cells of individual patients. The labs' procedure was surprisingly efficient; Woo Suk Hwang and his team needed on average only 17 human eggs to grow each of the cell lines (in contrast to the 242 eggs they needed to make a single stem-cell line just 15 months earlier). Research like this may someday lead to treatments for a wide range of disorders,

including Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases and spinal-cord injuries.

Meanwhile, U.S. scientists made progress in the field without having to sacrifice human eggs or embryonic tissue. At Duke University, doctors used umbilical-cord blood to save babies born with Krabbe disease, a rare and usually fatal genetic disorder. The illness, which prevents brain development and causes rapid deterioration and death, was immediately halted by transplanting another baby's cord blood—and the stem cells it contained—into infants with the Krabbe defect.



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TEA

Curling up with a nice cup of hot tea can do your body a lot of good—at least if the tea you're drinking is chamomile. A British study of 14 tea lovers

found that downing five cups of chamomile tea a day increases the body's levels of compounds that may boost the immune system and relieve muscle spasms like those that cause menstrual cramps. Drinking too much instant tea, on the other hand, can be harmful. A Washington University study reported that some brands of instant tea contained dangerous levels of fluoride—as much as 6.5 parts per million, well over the 4 p.p.m. that the EPA allows in drinking water. Ingesting high levels of fluoride can cause bone pain, bone spurs and fused vertebrae.

WOO SUK HWANG—SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY, KOREA/EPA

