



Oh, Fern, why DID you have to fib about your gastric band?

BY AMANDA PLATELL SEE PAGE 15

Teenager becomes 31st victim this year of our knife crime epidemic

SCHOOLGIRL STABBED TO DEATH ON HER WAY HOME

A TEENAGE girl was stabbed to death yards from her front door as she returned from school yesterday.

The 15-year-old, who was wearing her uniform, died in the lift of her block of flats.

Her body was discovered by a woman and her eight-year-old

By **Charlotte Gill, Tom Kelly and Vanessa Allen**

daughter on their way up to their own home.

As the lift doors opened, they were met with the horrific sight of the teenager lying in a pool of blood. She had been stabbed up to ten times.

The girl, who had not been named last night, is the 31st teenager to be

murdered in Britain this year and the 16th in London as the knife crime epidemic worsens.

The attack, near Waterloo station just south of the Thames, came only days after police launched a crack-down on carrying knives.

Neighbours said the victim was from Somalia and part of a quiet, churchgoing family who had lived

Turn to Page 4



Britain's Got Talent winner George Sampson returned to school yesterday - and promptly got a detention

BACK TO REALITY!

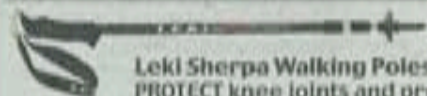
SEE PAGE FIVE

10 OF THE BEST

HEALTHY JOINT PRODUCTS



Oscar Vital Max Juicer, £249
PEOPLE with weak bones often eat an alkaline-high diet to stop calcium being leached from their bones. This powerful juicer can extract even more from the fruit and vegetables.
www.nutricentre.com



Leki Sherpa Walking Poles, £66
PROTECT knee joints and provide greater stability under foot, reducing the risk of bones being jarred or injured. Adjustable and collapses to a compact size.
www.leki.de



Kids Complete Complex, 150g, £10.80
THIS multivitamin and mineral powder is rich in calcium — good for kids who won't eat dairy. Sprinkle onto food or mix with juice.
www.biocare.co.uk

Perfect Sweet £2.69
THE UK brand name for xylitol — a natural sugar alternative. Studies show it helps bones absorb minerals such as calcium. From Sainsbury's and Waitrose.
perfectsweet.co.uk



Pure-Col, £29.95 for one month
COLLAGEN is a protein found in bones and cartilage, but it diminishes with age. This protects cartilage against deterioration, easing joint pain and injury.
Stockists: 0191 291 3385;
www.collagen4u.co.uk

OmegaFlex, £12.95 for 60 high-strength capsules
A FISH oil supplement that helps to maintain bone density and limit wear and tear on ligaments and joints. Contains omega-3, 6 and 9 fatty acids.
Mail order: 0845 1300 424.



Osteoporosis Home Kit, £49.99
CHECKS your loss of bone density or if you're suffering from osteoporosis. Diagnosis is by a home urine sample which is posted off for analysis.
www.homechec.co.uk



PairWave X400, £149.95
MAY ease joint pain and arthritis and help repair fractured bones. An electrical current restores the blood supply to the affected area and relieves pain.
Mail order: 0870 350 1264;
www.anhealth.co.uk



Willow Water, £1.29 for 1.5 litres.
A MINERAL water naturally high in calcium. Two litres a day provides a quarter of your recommended daily intake.
willowwater.com



Walking Fit Kit, £17.99
SHOWS you how to begin a walking fitness regime (walking helps maintain strong bones). Includes a pedometer with step counter and panic alarm.
www.habdirect.co.uk



TANIA ALEXANDER

Could lasers end our fear of the dentist?

By RACHEL MURPHY

DENTISTS have been using lasers for years for delicate procedures such as removing small growths from the gum. However, until recently laser machines haven't been powerful enough to cut through hard tissue such as enamel and bone and also decayed tissue.

Now a new machine developed in Europe means dentists can use lasers in almost every procedure. And with a laser, many patients don't need an injection of pain-killing anaesthetic — the dentist doesn't need to apply pressure on the tooth in the same way as with a drill, which is what causes most of the pain.

Dental lasers don't heat up like the drill — nor do they make the whine of a drill which many people find so off-putting.

The drawback is that they can't be used on old, silver mercury fillings, which still account for around 40 per cent of the fillings done by any NHS dentist. This is because the laser beam reflects back off the metal surface of the mercury, which is dangerous because it could, for example, reflect back into the dentist's eye.

The laser also vaporises mercury fillings, giving off a poisonous gas. For this same reason they are also ineffective on gold inlays.

The new system, called the Fotona Pidelis Plus III, is fitted with two complementary types of lasers.

Lasers work by exploding each individual molecule they are aimed at — this helps them to cut through and remove bone and enamel.

The new lasers are more efficient because they can accurately focus the high energy light waves that make

up the laser beam in such a way that this is absorbed by the tissue or plaque only where required, and does not damage the surrounding tissue or bone.

THE first laser on the machine automatically increases power when it is zapping decayed tissue, and slows down when it detects healthy tissue.

The second laser is used for more delicate work on gums and soft tissues, and is similar to those used by beauticians and dermatologists to smooth wrinkles or remove unsightly spider veins. It is able to do this gentler work because it's not beamed at such high-energy levels.



Picture: SCIENCE PHOTO LIBRARY

Dr Emmanouil Koloutsos, a specialist in laser dentistry at the Harley Street Dental Clinic, has seen the new machine being used on patients in Europe (it will be launched in the UK next month).

'For children and nervous patients especially, this is a breakthrough,' he says. 'The laser can do everything the drill can, but without the noise and heat and, for the vast majority, without causing pain — most people can manage without anaesthetic.'

'The laser sterilises as it works, and healing time is quicker because less damage is done during treatment.'

Dentists in the UK have lagged behind Europe in the uptake of laser drills, largely because the NHS doesn't fund laser dentistry, the cost of machines is high and laser dentistry is not taught to British undergraduates.

Dr Koloutsos, who studied laser dentistry at Aachen University, Germany — which has the only course in the world — believes that all good dental practices will have a high-tech laser within five years.

Dentist James Goolnik, Vice-President of the British Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, says that while the speed and efficiency of the new machine makes it a good addition to the dental surgery, it cannot replace the drill until old mercury fillings have been phased out.

'It's great for new cavities in untouched teeth, and ideal for children who won't be given mercury fillings in their lifetime, but it cannot remove old fillings unless they are the composite resin-white ones.'

'Most of the decay we see tends to be decay under existing fillings — so the use of a normal drill would still be required.'

THE EYE GYM

PUT up your favourite scenic postcard next to your computer monitor. Look at it closely a few times a day, examining the shapes and colours. This changes your focus and reduces eye strain.



Chewing gum can ease ulcers

A GUM from tree leaves may help treat an infection linked to stomach ulcers. The gum — known as mastic gum — comes from the resin of the Pistacia lentiscus tree which, when dried, becomes solid but chewable with a pleasant taste. It has long been used as a food additive for flavouring. Patients are being prescribed the gum daily for two weeks to get rid of the organism responsible for the ulcers — *helicobacter pylori*. They will get two grams a day and have levels of the bug measured five weeks later. Millions worldwide suffer from peptic ulcers, and the organism can become resistant to standard antibiotics, requiring new, more expensive drugs. The clinical trial in Greece, involving 42 patients, comes after research at Nottingham University showed that the gum is effective even in tiny doses.

Micro-pump for the heart

A TINY blood pump the size of a battery in a TV remote has been implanted in patients with chronic heart failure. The device works with the patient's own heart, and is designed to supplement the heart's own pumping, increasing blood flow and allowing the heart to rest and potentially recover. Implanted with minimal surgery, it is so small it can be placed just under the skin in a pacemaker-like pocket. Made by U.S.-based Circulite, it is designed to provide long-term circulation support for patients with chronic heart failure. Its patented micro-pump took eight years to develop. A small number of patients have so far been implanted with the device. 'Patients have demonstrated significant clinical improvements,' says Dr Bart Meyns, chief of cardiac surgery at Gasthuisberg University Hospital, Belgium, who has been involved in the pump's development.

Broccoli, the bone-booster

VITAMIN K may be good for your bones. New findings show that eating foods rich in it — green leafy vegetables such as spinach and broccoli, as well as cereals and vegetable oils — is linked to greater bone density and reduced bone loss in early post-menopausal women. Two studies, at Scottish universities, have shown beneficial effects. The Aberdeen study, based on women aged 49 to 54, found that higher levels of the vitamin are associated with higher bone mineral density. The Dundee study has shown that women who had vitamin K, vitamin D plus calcium showed a significant and sustained increase in bone density. Its researchers say the benefits are potentially achievable by increased dietary intakes of vitamin K rather than by supplements.