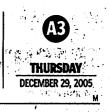




## **TODAY, IN 1890**

The Wounded Knee massacre took place in South Dakota as some 300 Sioux Indians were killed by U.S. troops sent to disarm them.



## breast-cancer treatment 0

## Femara already used for advanced cases

## **By Marilynn Marchione** Associated Press

Women now have another drug they can take to prevent breast cancer from returning after surgery to remove the tumor.

The Food and Drug Administration yesterday approved a new use for Femara, a medication already licancer. It now can be given as initial therapy to women past menopause who have early breast cancer, the years after starting treatment.

In today's New England Journal of Medicine, a study reports that Femara was more effective, at preventing recurrences than the current gold United States, Europe and Australia. standard, támoxifen.

agency said.

drug already licensed for early breast cancer, are aromatase inhibitors, which block production of estrogen, a hormone that fuels the growth of most tumors that develop after menopause. Tamoxifen blunts the couple years of tamoxifen. ability of estrogen to enter cells.

The study estimated that 84 percensed for treating advanced breast cent of women given Femara versus 81 percent of those on tamoxifen would have no signs of cancer five

roughly two years of information on journal. relapses among the 8.000 women in the study, done by researchers in the

It was financed by Femara's mak-Femara and Arimidex, a similar er, Novartis. Many of the researchers own stock in or are consultants for Novartis or rival drug makers.

Several other studies have shown Femara or Arimidex to be better either as initial treatment or after a

"These trials, with close to 30,000 participants, consistently demonstrate that treatment with an aromatase inhibitor alone or after tamoxifen treatment is beneficial." Dr. Sandra Swain of the National Cancer In-

The estimates were based on stitute wrote in an editorial in the

The challenge now is figuring out how long women should take these drugs, which drug is best, and whether switching drugs at some point is helpful, she wrote.

Tamoxifen remains the top choice for women who get breast cancer before menopause because aromatase inhibitors aren't thought to be effective then.

A third aromatase inhibitor, Pfizer Inc.'s Aromasin, also has shown promise for preventing recurrence when given after several years of tamoxifen. But it has not yet been tested against tamoxifen as initial therapy.