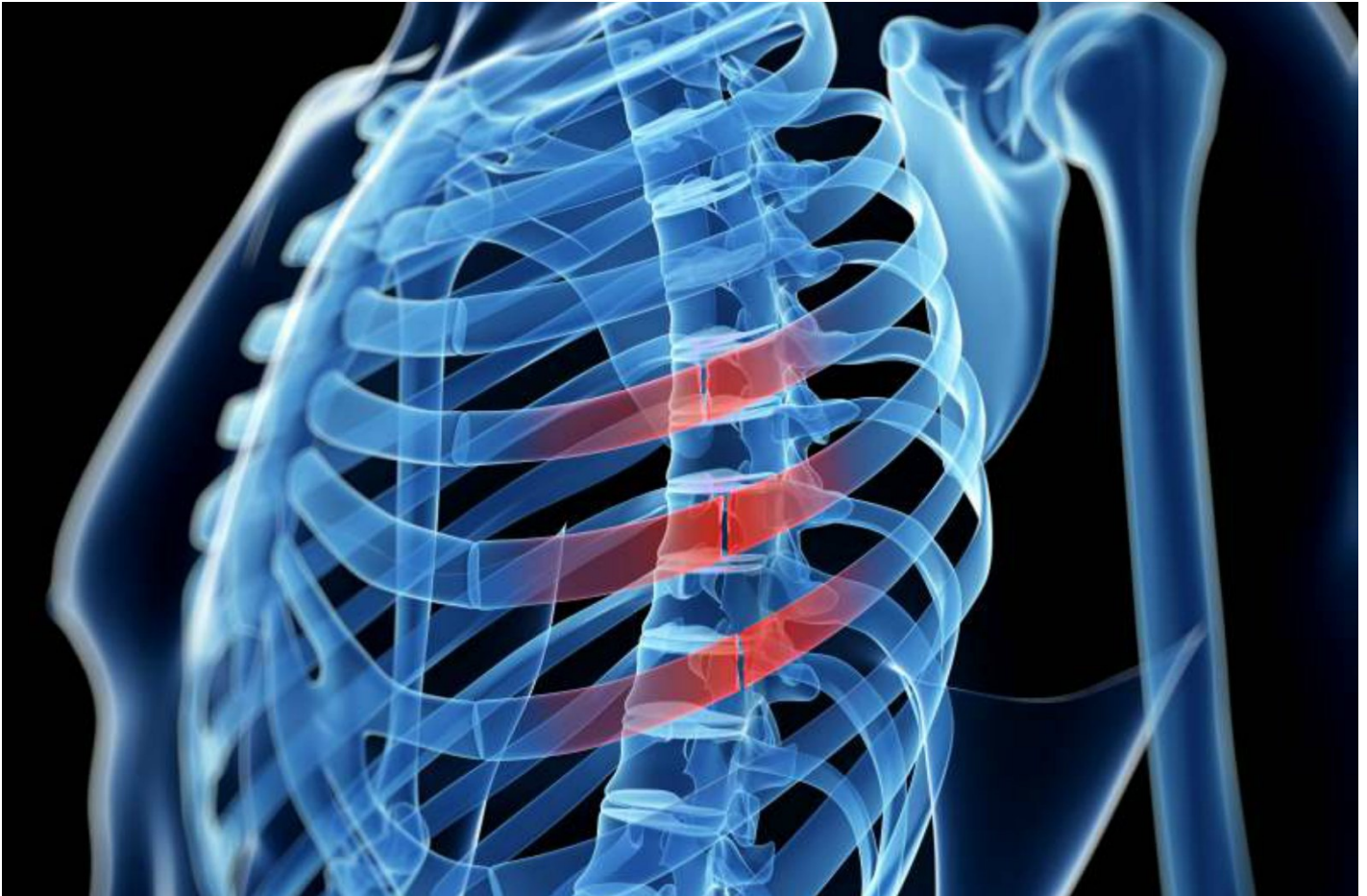


## U-Plate Eases The Pain Of Broken Ribs

Oregon Health & Science University



Patients with rib fractures often suffer a slow and painful healing process, generally treatable with only oral narcotics and painkillers. Convinced that a surgical method could alleviate pain and speed recovery, surgeons at the Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) have begun a pilot study to question the traditional practice of “not fixing” rib fractures.

“*Researchers are working to establish a reliable method to accurately measure the pain and disability of rib fractures and develop a surgical technique and standard criteria for treatment.*”

A key component is the U-plate — a device made of titanium which is implanted during a minimally-invasive surgery. It bridges the fracture, helping to speed healing and prevent further injury.

The U-plate was designed by Thomas Ellis, an associate professor in the Department of Orthopaedics & Rehabilitation at the OHSU School of Medicine, and mechanical engineer Joel Gillard. It has been approved by the FDA and is licensed to Acute Innovations, which was launched using OHSU technology. Acute Innovations is committed to providing innovative solutions to challenging thoracic surgical procedures. The U-plate has been on the market for a year, and

Acute Innovations estimates over a dozen patients (outside of the study) have benefited from the device.

This story was originally published in 2007.

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