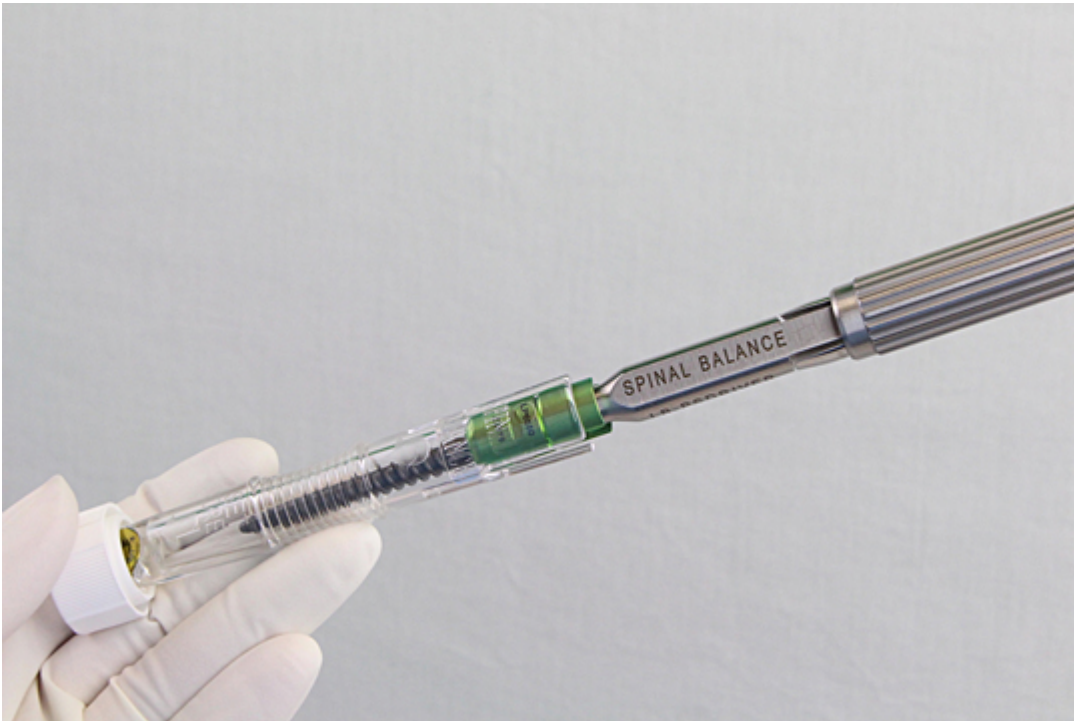


Biomedical company created by UT faculty celebrates FDA clearance, first product launch

By Christine Long : May 25th, 2016

Two local bioengineers are officially in the business of back pain relief.

A new medical device developed by researchers at The University of Toledo to help reduce infections from spinal surgery is making its market debut.



Spinal Balance created Libra, a pre-sterilized, individually packaged screw system designed to combat contamination in the operating room.

Spinal Balance will celebrate the launch of its first locally grown product called the Libra Pedicle Screw System Wednesday, May 25, at 6 p.m. at the Nitschke Technology Commercialization Complex on UT's Main Campus.

Libra is a pre-sterilized, individually packaged screw system designed to combat contamination in the operating room as a result of contact with people, containers or surfaces. The product will help surgeons at hospitals worldwide improve patient care and reduce costs.

“Deep bone infections are a serious problem,” said Dr. Anand Agarwal, CEO of Spinal Balance and UT professor of bioengineering. “Keeping anything from touching or contacting the threads of a screw is very important. Our aim is to provide the surgeon with technically advanced implants that are easy to handle and can be implanted using improved aseptic technique.”

“We reduce the variables in the operating room that contribute to infections,” said Don Kennedy, director of sales and marketing for Spinal Balance. “No one ever has to touch the implant prior to it being placed into a patient.”



The Food and Drug Administration cleared the Libra system last year to be used for spine fusion and to treat back pain in cases of degeneration, trauma and deformity.

Agarwal and Dr. Vijay Goel, UT Distinguished University Professor and the McMaster-Gardner Endowed Chair of Orthopedic Bioengineering, launched Spinal Balance in 2013 and developed the Libra technology through support from the state of Ohio’s Third Frontier Program, Rocket Innovations and UT’s LaunchPad Incubation program.

“We value, foster and invest in the entrepreneurial spirit here at The University of Toledo,” said Jessica Sattler, UT director of economic engagement and business development programs. “Our LaunchPad Incubation program provides faculty members and community entrepreneurs intensive entrepreneurial assistance and state-of-the-art facilities for research, development, manufacturing and storage as they navigate the long road from concept to commercialization. The success of Drs. Agarwal and Goel also is a proud accomplishment for our program.”

The celebration of the Libra product launch will begin with a reception at 6 p.m., followed by presentations at 6:15 p.m. and a dinner at 7:15 p.m.

Spinal Balance is one of three private companies Agarwal has located in the LaunchPad Incubation program with other UT research faculty members.

Agarwal’s company called IntelliSenze recently received \$150,000 in state funds to help commercialize microprocessor chips under development that can detect the presence of bacteria and viruses.