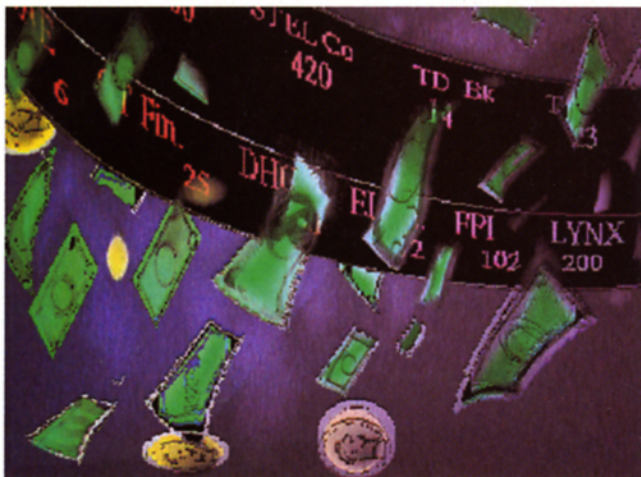


Interest on new GIC linked to stock market



A new form of investment is offering Canadians a chance to run with the stock market bulls without fear of straying too far from the safety of the banking corral.

SecuriStock, offered by the National Bank of Canada, is a form of Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) that has its interest rate tied to the performance of the stock market. The terms of the investment and the index to which the security is linked may vary.

For example, the SecuriStock offered earlier this year was pegged to the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSE). Once a month, the bank recorded the level of the Toronto Stock Exchange 100 Index, a measure of the performance of the TSE's leading 100 company stocks. When the SecuriStock GIC matured, the bank worked out the average growth of the TSE 100 and used that figure to calculate the interest rate they'd pay. The bank paid 100 per cent of the average TSE 100 yield

for one-year investments, 150 per cent for three-year investments and double the TSE 100 rate for five-year investments.

Assume you invested \$1,000 for five years and the TSE 100 produced a gain of 50 per cent over that time. Since SecuriStock paid twice that amount for a five-year investment, you would earn a return of 100 per cent, \$1,000, on your \$1,000 investment.

The only risk is that the index might fall. In that case, you would get back your original investment without any interest.

"It's aimed at people who want more than GICs can offer but aren't quite ready for mutual funds," says National Bank's product manager Richard Allard. He says public response has been enthusiastic. "It's done astoundingly well," he says. Other banks and some life insurance companies are now offering their own versions of the stock-linked investments.

—John Keating

Antigen indicates less serious breast cancer

You've found a lump in your breast and expect the worst. It doesn't always turn out that way. Doctors in Toronto have developed a new test that tells them how serious the cancer is and what treatment will work best. Doctors are looking for a protein molecule called prostate-specific antigen (PSA). PSA has been used for the last 10 years to diagnose prostate cancer in men. Now doctors have discovered that about 30 per cent of breast tumors also produce PSA. Women who have PSA tend to live three times longer and have fewer relapses than women who don't have it. "Women with PSA tend to respond better to endocrine treatment, such as tamoxifen," says Dr. Eleftherios Diamandis of The Toronto Hospital. He says some women with PSA can have breast tumors removed and may require no further treatment at all. However, it will be some time before the process becomes routine because clinical trials must first be carried out.

—J.K.

Combined infant vaccine saves lives and money



Doctors in Ontario are now taking on common childhood diseases five at a time, thanks to a new combined vaccine.

For the past couple of years, physicians have used single injections to protect kids against diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus and polio. But a second needle was required for inoculat-

ing children against Haemophilus type B (HiB), a bacteria that can cause meningitis.

The new combined shot adds the Haemophilus vaccine to the mix. That cuts the number of syringes in half, reduces the cost in doctors' fees and leaves babies a little happier.

Dr. Ron Gold, director of infection control at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, was in charge of Canadian clinical trials for the vaccine. He says that tests that were conducted with 400 babies in Vancouver showed no increase in side effects when the Haemophilus vaccine was combined with the four other components.

In June, Ontario became the first province to use the new combined vaccine. The manufacturer, Connaught Laboratories Limited, estimates the province will save \$2 million a year in syringes and reduced doctors' fees. Other provinces are expected to follow suit soon.

—J.K.