

FDA okays new Medinol stent

By Zuri Dar

Three years after its divorce from medical device-maker Boston Scientific, Jerusalem stent-maker Medinol has received a U.S. Food and Drug Administration okay to manufacture its patented NIRflex stents at its Jerusalem plant.

Medinol had marketed its stents (wire-mesh props to keep major blood vessels open post-surgery) via Boston Scientific. Four years ago, the Boston-Medinol partnership grabbed a third of the stent market, but relations crumbled in mutual recriminations in early 2001. This FDA approval is Medinol's first since the two companies dramatically parted ways. The approval creates great com-

mercial opportunity for Medinol in the world market for its stents, says the company, noting that the NIRflex has already won European approval for use. The global trend these days is leaning toward drug-coated stents, which are designed to prevent the reclogging of the affected artery. NIRflex is not coated and each unit costs about a third of the coated versions, or about \$1,000.

The company also notes that the approval should fast-track other FDA approvals for additional products. Dr Judith Richter, the company's chief executive, commented that the approval is an important milestone for Medinol, in that the company can now be independent in production and marketing current and future products.