

GREAT QUESTIONS IN SCIENCE

Where Did We Come From?

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Where did the very first living thing on Earth come from? Can a simple injection erase a painful memory? From a single human cell to the entire universe, *NOVA scienceNOW* asks where did we come from.

Revealing the Origins of Life

Where did the very first living thing on Earth come from? Scientists have long argued that billions of years ago, life emerged on its own—but no one knows exactly how. Now, in a landmark discovery, chemist John Sutherland has created the conditions in which the building blocks of RNA, one of the key molecules of life and the probable precursor to DNA, assemble themselves naturally.

Origins of the Solar System

Combining chemical evidence from meteorites with the latest computer simulations, scientists show how, nearly five billion years ago, a supernova shock wave could have swept through a cloud of dust and gas and caused it to collapse, eventually forming the sun and the planets—if it didn't blow the baby solar system apart first.

Lice and Human Evolution

Fossils can tell us a lot about human evolution, but still leave many questions unanswered. Now, there's another source of information—though it's not for the squeamish. After sucking our blood for millions of years, lice are suddenly proving their value: their DNA turns out to hold a treasure trove of clues about our evolution.

Profile: André Fenton

Can a simple injection erase a painful memory? André Fenton (SUNY Downstate) says it can. But he isn't in the business of wiping out personal histories. He hopes that his work can help people struggling with dementia and Alzheimer's, and one day illuminate the biological root of memory itself.

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