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## Shop around for drugs

THE Minister for Health, Tanya Plibersek, has gotten in on the debate over the August price increases imposed by pharmaceutical companies on 85 brands of medicines listed on the PBS, urging patients to shop around for their brand of medicine.

The majority of the brands involved in the increase had their price reduced in April following the PBS reforms, however this month the pharmaceutical companies increased their brand surcharge, in some cases by as much as \$7.04.

“There is always another brand of the same medicine on the PBS which does not have a surcharge imposed on it, so patients can avoid being slugged by these increases, which are paid to the pharmaceutical company, by shopping around,” said Plibersek.

## Saizen shortage

THE Department of Health has announced that there is a national shortage of Saizen solution for injection (somatropin).

Saizen is subsidised through the PBS Growth Hormone Program.

The shortage arises from a drug recall from the supplier of all short dated Saizen, and the Department has ceased supplying this PBS item until sufficient supply is guaranteed.

Patients using Saizen are advised to ensure that their supply does not expire before the end of their treatment period, and if it does, to contact their pharmacy and doctor as soon as possible to arrange replacement medicine.

See [www.health.gov.au/hgh](http://www.health.gov.au/hgh).

## Consumers know their choice?

MARKETING tactics are persuading healthy people to use multivitamin supplements that they may not need, according to consumer advocacy group Choice.

The comments come as part of criticism leveled at the complementary medicines industry by Choice this week, with the consumer group saying that unnecessary product segmentation along with confusing labelling is making it difficult for consumers to know if they really need multivitamins.

“Marketing messages, often backed up by high profile sporting celebrities, give the impression that in order to be fit and healthy, we all need multivitamins,” said Choice spokesperson, Ingrid Just.

“If you have a healthy diet and you’re not a person with specific nutritional requirements, there’s a good chance you’re wasting your money,” Just said.

Addressing the issue of product segmentation Choice argued that multivitamins often exhibit “unnecessary market segmentation”, with many products advertised to appeal to different target groups, despite there being very little difference in their ingredients.

“An example of market segmentation is the boys’ and girls’ Bioglan Kids Gummies Multivitamins,” said Just.

“The products are identical – the only difference is that one packet features Disney Princesses and the other features characters from the movie Cars,” Just added.

Taking aim at what it called inconsistent and complex labelling

of complementary medicines, Choice called for manufacturers to apply uniform labelling information so that consumers can make accurate comparisons.

“Some ingredients on multivitamin products are listed under their vitamin name while others appear as their chemical name,” said Just.

“For example, vitamin B3 can be listed under its vitamin name or its chemical name (niacin).

“An untrained person probably wouldn’t know that the two things are one and the same,” she added.

MEANWHILE the Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia has hit back at the accusations, saying that research conducted in May last year found that 75% of consumers knew what complementary medicine they were taking and why.

“Comments made by Choice today highlight that there are consumer segments considered to benefit from supplementation, including pregnant women and those on restrictive diets,” said the CHC’s Dr Wendy Morrow.

“This goes hand in hand with the research conducted in 2011 which found that consumers are making informed choices with regard to the products they are purchasing in order to address their individual health needs,” she added.

Morrow also hit back at labelling claims, saying that the complementary medicines industry is working closely with the TGA to ensure labels provide appropriate information in an easily digestible way.

## Organ changes

THE NSW Organ Donor Register has been decommissioned, with the change now meaning that people in NSW can now register for organ donation through a single national register – the Australian Organ Donor Register.

See [www.donatelife.gov.au](http://www.donatelife.gov.au).

## WIN A EUKY BEAR PACK



Every day this week, **Pharmacy Daily** is giving one lucky reader the chance to win a Euky Bear Pack, valued at \$50, courtesy of **FGB Natural Products**.

Each pack contains a Euky Bearub, Euky Bear Thermometer, Koala Soft Toy and Information Guide.

Euky Bear is available at pharmacies.

For your chance to win, simply be the first person to send in the correct answer to the daily question below to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**Euky Bearub is owned & made in what country?**

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Congratulations to yesterday’s winner Nolelene Morris, from Marlin Coast Amcal Pharmacy.

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## Health, Beauty and New Products

Welcome to our weekly feature with all the latest health, beauty and new products for pharmacy!

Suppliers wanting to promote products in this feature should email [advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:advertising@pharmacydaily.com.au).



### DISPENSARY CORNER

#### CHOCOLATE'S age-old appeal.

Archeologists have recently found evidence which may fly in the face of claims that chocolate in solid form is a modern invention.

The archeologists were investigating a site in Mexico's Yucatan peninsula where they found a plate with traces of 2,500-year old chocolate.

This find, according to the team, suggests that in addition to drinking chocolate, ancient Mexicans may have in fact eaten it as well.

Prior to the find, it was generally agreed that chocolate was only drunk by wealthy citizens in ancient Mexico.

"This is the first time it has been found on a plate used for serving food," one of the team told press.

"It is unlikely that it was ground there (on the plate), because for that they probably used metates (grinding stones)," the researcher added.

#### NOT one for acrophobics.

A restaurant currently under construction in Austria is sending a cold shiver down the spines of those who fear heights, with its location nestled a cool 3,440 metres (10,000-feet) up in the Wildspitze Mountain, on top of the Pitztal glacier.

Costing a mere \$29.5 million, the restaurant, aptly named 3440, is set to open its doors towards the end of the year, and will be linked to a new ski-lift which will deliver skiers to its tables.

Despite its lofty heights, the restaurant is promising to keep its prices down to earth.



Artist's impression of 3440



#### Whip eyes into perfection

Designer Brands is whipping Aussie eyes to perfection with its **Whipped Mineral Eye Shadows**. Feather-light and air whipped, the eye shadows come in a series of delicate on-trend colours including: Ivory, Mushroom, Purple and Ebony. Crease proof, fade proof and designed to survive any night out, the shadows' effect can range from sheer, medium to dramatic, depending on the amount used and how they are blended. In addition, the Purple and Ebony tones can be combined to create the perfect 'smokey eye' look, whereas the Ivory tone can also be used to highlight cheekbones, temples and the lip's Cupid's bow, whilst the Mushroom shade is perfect for contouring to emphasize bone structure.

RRP: \$8.99 each

Stockist: 1300 765 332

Website: [www.dbcosmetics.com.au](http://www.dbcosmetics.com.au)

#### Say bye-bye to bites naturally

**Para'Kito Wristbands** are designed to protect wearers from mosquitoes naturally. The refillable wristbands are based on a proprietary technology of impregnation of essential oils into polymers (pellets) which are contained within the band. The pellets contain seven essential oils including lavender, geranium, citronella, pine tree, patchouli, clove and peppermint which together protect wearers from mosquitoes by masking their presence. The pellets are effective for 15 days, and because they are enclosed within the wristband, never come in contact with the skin. The product is waterproof and contact with water whether through swimming, rainfall or other means will not affect the product potency. In addition the Wristbands are suitable for use in both tropical and temperate regions, and are suitable for everybody, including pregnant women, babies and people with skin allergies.

RRP: \$24.95 (wristband with 30 days supply of pellets) \$15.95 30 day pellet refills

Stockist: Optica 1800 199 860, [www.opticaaccessories.com](http://www.opticaaccessories.com)

Website: [au.parakito.com](http://au.parakito.com)



#### Lift those pretty peepers

**Clarins' Defining Eye Lift** is set to launch on Australian shores in October, promising to transform eyes with a triple draining/relieving/lightening action and immediate lift effect. The product contains oat polyosis for lifting; caffeine and ginkgo biloba for eye relief; maritime pine bark, ginkgo biloba and dextran sulfate for draining; extracts of alchemilla and maritime pine bark, and ginkgo for lightening; as well as trehalose (a vegetal sugar) for hydrating and soothing.

RRP: \$65

Stockist: 02 9663 4277

Website: [www.adorebeauty.com.au](http://www.adorebeauty.com.au)



#### No more scars

**Protec Scar Cream** is designed to help fade, soften, smooth and flatten scars and stretch marks. According to Protec, the cream reduces the appearance of stretch marks by up to 52 per cent with results seen in as little as four weeks, and is able to tackle the appearance of scars resulting from surgery, injury, acne, burns, sun damage and pregnancy. Key actives in the product include Darutoside, a molecule extracted from the natural herb Siegesbeckia Orientalis, which combined with Vitamin E helps improve the appearance of scars and other skin irregularities.

RRP: \$12.95

Stockist: 1800 791 381

Website: [www.keysun.com.au](http://www.keysun.com.au)

