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## PBS Dec changes

**EYLEA** (aflibercept 4 mg/0.1 mL injection, 1 x 0.1 mL vial), Myfortic (mycophenolate 180 mg tablet: enteric, 120 tablets), and Phebra Naproxen Suspension (naproxen 125 mg/5 mL oral liquid, 474 mL) are just three of the new December additions to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme this month.

The full list now available to view on the PBS website

([www.pbs.gov.au](http://www.pbs.gov.au)), and also includes the addition of Paraffin + Retinyl Palmitate, paraffin + retinyl palmitate 138 microgram/g (equivalent to 250 units/g vitamin A) eye ointment, 5g; and Votrient (pazopanib 200 mg tablet, 30).

Meanwhile December has also seen a number of deletions from the PBS, including Celestone-M, Antroquoril (betamethasone (as valerate) 0.02% (200 microgram/g) ointment, 100G); and Nemdyn (Neomycin + Bacitracin Zinc, neomycin 3.5mg/g + bacitracin zinc 400 international units/g ointment, 10g).

## Petrol sniffing measures

**BP** Australia and Shell Australia have agreed to supply a new low aromatic fuel (Opal) from mid next year, as part of a bid to stamp out petrol sniffing in regional and remote communities.

The agreement will see BP supply the fuel to Central and South Australia, and parts of Western Australia, including the West Australian Goldfields and the Ngaanyatjarra lands; whilst Shell will supply it to the NT, the Gulf of Carpentaria, Cape York and East Kimberley.

## The truth about shingles

**SHINGLES** should not be dismissed as an inconsequential skin condition that older people get and then get over, according to Professor Dominic Dwyer, Director, Centre for Infectious Diseases and Microbiology Laboratory Services, Westmead Hospital at University of Sydney.

Dwyer's comments follow the release of a new study conducted for CSL Biotherapies by Hall & Partners, involving 337 Australian men and women aged 60 years and over who had been diagnosed with shingles.

Key findings in the study included the fact that shingles pain was most commonly described as "electric, like my nerve endings were on fire", whilst other common descriptions included "hot needles" and "stabbing".

Researchers also found that the ongoing pain many experience for months, if not years, after shingles

has a profound effect on their wellbeing and ability to participate actively in society, with those suffering persistent pain twice as likely to report a negative outlook on life.

In addition two in three (67%) of those surveyed with chronic shingles pain reported having to decrease or stop going out and socialising, whilst more than half (52%) had to limit walking and were unable to sleep properly (57%); and almost one in three had difficulty with simple activities such as bathing (31%) and getting dressed (27%).

"Many people think of shingles as just an unpleasant rash - like an adult version of chicken pox," said Professor Dwyer.

"The truth is, chronic pain from shingles is common and debilitating, particularly amongst those in their sixties, seventies and older, yet it is not well-known by the general public.

"Our seniors deserve more.

"They deserve recognition and support when living with this debilitating condition, which is likely to become more prevalent with Australia's growing older population," he added.

## Cometriq approval

**THE** US Food and Drug Administration has approved Cometriq (cabozantinib) to treat medullary thyroid cancer that has spread to other parts of the body (metastasised).

Cometriq is a kinase inhibitor that blocks abnormal kinase proteins involved in the development and growth of medullary cancer cells.

Patients should not eat for at least 2 hours before and 1 hour after taking Cometriq.

See [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov).

## Black Cohosh warning

**THE** UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency has issued a warning regarding Viridian Nutrition's Black Cohosh Root capsules, advising people to return them to the store where they purchased them.

The reasoning behind the warning is that the product was found to contain an unintended and undeclared plant material.

"Testing found that the product, which should only contain Black Cohosh (*Cimicifuga racemosa*), also contained another species, most probably *Cimicifuga foetida*," the MHRA said in a statement.

"The undeclared plant material, *Cimicifuga foetida*, is not generally used in Western herbal medicine and its properties or safety has not been evaluated," the statement added.

## You need to eat well too

**A PILL** is not the be all and end all of health, according to a new study which found that patients with heart disease who take hypertension and cholesterol drugs can cut their mortality risk from the disease by up to 35% simply by eating right.

It may come as no surprise that a healthy diet can prolong life by staving off lifestyle diseases, but the study of nearly 32,000 patients from 40 countries worldwide, found that over 4.5 years, heart disease patients cut their risk of another heart attack by 14%, stroke by 19% and congestive heart failure by 28% with the help of a healthy diet.

Researchers defined a healthy diet as one with lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts and fish, and only a little red meat and eggs.

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### Guild Update

A reminder that chemicals pharmacists handle every day can be a security risk.

Internationally, hydrogen peroxide has been used in terrorist attacks, such as in the London Bombings, to cause fatalities and mass casualties.

In 2005, police in Australia uncovered a plot involving a group of men from Sydney and Victoria who were stockpiling chemicals and materials, including hydrogen peroxide, in preparation for a terrorist attack.

In both scenarios, materials for the homemade explosive were purchased from retail stores such as hardware, beauty stores and pharmacies.

Help prevent, detect and deter chemical misuse by considering:

- Is the customer unfamiliar with the chemical's intended purpose?
- Does the purchaser have invalid or out-of-date documentation?
- Are the chemicals being purchased with large cash payments?
- Is the customer willing to provide adequate forms of identification?

If you are suspicious of any transaction, you can report it to the National Security Hotline on 1800 123 400.

Alternatively, you can email the National Security Hotline at [hotline@nationalecurity.gov.au](mailto:hotline@nationalecurity.gov.au).

For more information see [www.australia.gov.au/chemicalsecurity](http://www.australia.gov.au/chemicalsecurity).



**The Pharmacy  
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## Teens and medication use

**THE** majority of teenagers suffering from a mental health disorders are not taking psychiatric medications to treat their condition, a new study has found.

Published in the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, the study looked at ten thousand one hundred twenty-three US adolescents aged 13 to 18 years who participated in the American National Comorbidity Survey Adolescent Supplement.

The cross-sectional survey involved direct household interviews of combined household and school samples representative of the general population of adolescents in the United States.

Teenage participants in the study were asked questions that helped to ascertain information about mental disorders and service use.

Amongst youth who were found to have a mental disorder, 14.2% reported that they had been treated with a psychotropic medication.

Looking at the breakdown of medication usage, researchers

found that teenagers with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) had the highest rates of prescribed medicine use (31%), whilst teens with a mood disorder such as depression or bipolar had a 19.7% rate of medication use.

19 percent of teens with eating disorders were also found to be on medication treatment, as were 11.6% of those suffering with anxiety.

Overall researchers noted that only a small portion of teens with a mental disorder were prescribed psychotropic medication, and those that were tended to be suffering bipolar (1.7%) or a neurodevelopmental disorder such as autism (2%).

Interestingly, the study also found that 2.5% of teens not suffering a mental disorder were prescribed a psychotropic.

Of these teens, 78% reported having previously suffered a mental or neurodevelopmental disorder and associated psychological distress or impairment.

## WIN A DESIGNER BRANDS BB CRÈME

Every day this week **Pharmacy Daily** is giving four lucky readers the chance to win **Designer Brands NEW Tinted Moisturising Miracle BB Crème**.

For a flawless finish without the heaviness of foundation, Designer Brands NEW Tinted Moisturising Miracle BB Crème provides an all-in-one solution that's as easy to use as a moisturiser, combining the best of make-up with the benefits of skincare.

Loaded with skin nourishing ingredients Q10, Antioxidants and Peptides to help promote the appearance of younger, fresher looking skin; Vitamins C & E, Aloe Vera and Green Tea Extract to help skin look fresh while Allantoin helps soothe.

To win, be one of the first four readers to send the correct answer to the question below to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

**What are 5 benefits of Designer Brands Tinted Moisturising Miracle BB Crème?**

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winners, **Joanne Campbell** of **Macquarie Hospital**, **Katy Duldig** from **The Pharmacy Guild of Australia**, **Robyn Kirkby** of **Powrgard Australia** and **Alex Moores** of **Pharmabroker Sales**.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

**WHISKY** for eyesight?

A Kiwi man, Denis Duthie, has had his sight restored by a bottle of Johnnie Walker Black Label.

Duthie lost his sight after a few shots of vodka, to celebrate his parents 50th wedding anniversary reacted with his diabetes medication and rendered him blind.

"I thought it had got dark and I'd missed out on a bit of time but it was only about half-past-three in the afternoon," Duthie said.

"I was fumbling around the bedroom for the light switch but I'd just gone completely blind."

After going blind Duthie was rushed to Taranaki Base Hospital where he was diagnosed with formaldehyde poisoning.

The treatment for formaldehyde poisoning is ingesting ethanol, the type of alcohol found in alcoholic drinks.

Unfortunately, there was not enough ethanol in the hospital to treat Duthie, so doctors managed to secure a bottle of Black Label from the local Bottle-O.

The whisky was then fed into Duthie's stomach via a tube, and he woke up five days later with his vision returned.

**THE** truth is out there?

The worlds of conspiracy theories and alien aficionados have been sent into a spin this week, after the publication of a picture seemingly showing an alien-looking cloud on an American UFO website this week.

"I thought it looked more like a hamburger than a UFO," said the cloud's photographer, Jim Paxie, who caught the cloud in the early evening hours.

Paxie's photo was then hijacked by his brother-in-law, an alien theorist, who posted the photo onto the popular site UFO Sightings Daily, where it started a veritable wildfire of theories.

One popular possibility currently doing the rounds is that UFO's cover themselves in cloud in order to move with stealth.