

## FROM THE MAKERS OF NUROFEN: AN UPDATE ON THE USE OF IBUPROFEN FOR COVID-19

### To our valued pharmacy partners,

We are grateful for your dedicated efforts to keep Australians healthy.

In the wake of the current COVID-19 pandemic, it's more important than ever to access factual news and ensure you're sharing the right information with your patients.

We know there have been stories circulating about the use of ibuprofen at this time, which may be causing you or your team some confusion. To address any misconceptions, here are the facts:

Based on all available information, there is **no proven scientific evidence** linking the use of ibuprofen to the aggravation of covid-19.

### The World Health Organisation (WHO)

'WHO does not recommend against the use of ibuprofen'

'WHO are consulting with physicians treating COVID-19 patients and are not aware of reports of any negative effects of ibuprofen, beyond the usual known side effects that limit its use in certain populations'

– World Health Organisation (WHO) Tweet, 19 March 2020<sup>1</sup>

### The Department of Health Australia

'Over the counter anti-inflammatories may play a role in general symptomatic management of mild cases of COVID-19 disease'

– 7 News media story, 17 March 2020<sup>2</sup>

### Consumer Healthcare Products (CHP)

'CHP Australia is not aware of any scientific evidence supporting claims...that the use of NSAIDs, such as ibuprofen, could affect the health outcomes of COVID-19 patients'

– Consumer Healthcare Products (CHP) Australia, statement, 19 March 2020<sup>3</sup>

### The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA)

'There is currently no published peer-reviewed scientific evidence to support a direct link between use of ibuprofen and more severe infection with COVID-19'

– Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), statement, 20 March 2020<sup>4</sup>

### The European Medicines Agency (EMA)

'When starting treatment for fever or pain in COVID-19, patients and healthcare professionals should consider all available treatment options including paracetamol and NSAIDs'

– European Medicines Agency (EMA), statement, 18 March 2020<sup>5</sup>

Ibuprofen is a well-established medicine that has been used safely as an over-the-counter fever and pain reliever, including in viral illnesses, for more than 30 years. As a leading ibuprofen brand that is part of a responsible, science-led organisation, we remain committed to communicating accurate information related to the safe use of our products.

If asked, we encourage you to speak with your patients and their caregivers using the above information.

We understand that during this time you are constantly adapting to the changing pharmacy landscape. If there is any way we can assist you with further guidance or with updates on the current stock position of the RB portfolio, please contact your RB Representative.

Yours in health,  
The Nurofen Australia team.

## Today's issue of PD

**Pharmacy Daily** today has four pages of the latest pharmacy news, plus a front cover wrap from **Nurofen**, and a full page from **MSC Signs**.

## Winter is coming

**SUPPLIERS** wanting to showcase products for the upcoming cooler season are being invited to participate in **Pharmacy Daily's** upcoming Winter Spotlight feature.

The special add-on option provides the ability to promote products or services via a series of listing including an image, description and call to action, reaching **Pharmacy Daily's** loyal base of more than 13,500 daily industry readers.

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## No action on CPD during COVID - Board

**THE** Pharmacy Board of Australia has confirmed that it will not take any action during the current registration period if pharmacists are unable to meet the Continuing Professional Development Standard due to COVID-19.

An update on the Board's response to the crisis has noted that it is aware that the current situation is impacting on registered health practitioners' CPD in various ways, including where CPD events or leave are cancelled.

"The Board encourages practitioners to continue CPD relevant to their practice where possible... in responding to the needs of the public during this emergency, pharmacists are likely to encounter issues that require investigation, research and learning and these efforts can be documented for inclusion in CPD records," the Board said.



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"We do not want CPD requirements to take practitioners away from clinical care, or cause additional concerns to practitioners already under pressure due to COVID-19.

"Accordingly, if a pharmacist can't meet the CPD standard because of the COVID-19 emergency, then we won't take any action for the registration period during which the COVID-19 emergency is in

force; there will be no need to apply for an exemption," the Board update states.

Urgent meetings will also take place this week with the Australian Pharmacy Council and the Council of Pharmacy Schools to "identify impacts on students and interns and to identify suitable measures to support them to meet learning outcomes during COVID-19," with further updates promised ASAP.

## PPA Easter break

**THE** Pharmacy Programs Administrator (PPA) has confirmed it is operating as normal through the COVID-19 crisis, but will be closed for the Easter public holidays, this Fri 10 Apr and next Mon 13 Apr.

Business continuity arrangements are seeing PPA Support Centre staff increasingly work from home, with callers advised they may occasionally hear background noise during calls.

## Nurofen & COVID

**THE** makers of Nurofen have today highlighted official statements debunking misconceptions around the use of ibuprofen and treatment of coronavirus symptoms.

If asked, pharmacists are being encouraged to speak to patients and their caregivers about the use of ibuprofen which "has been safely used as an over-the-counter fever and pain reliever for over 30 years" - see the **cover page** for details.

When your customers reach out to you for a stronger eczema treatment, **reach for Kloxema.**

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- ▶ Provides relief of inflammation and itch.<sup>2</sup>
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**References:** 1. Dermatology Expert Group. Therapeutic Guidelines: Dermatology, version 4. Topical corticosteroid preparations (Appendix 4.1). Therapeutic Guidelines Ltd [Internet]. 2019 [cited 2019 June 28]. Available from: <https://guidelines.clinicalguidelines.org.au/viewTopic?topicid=10001-corticosteroid-preparations>

2. Kloxema Cream Approved Product Information, 12 September 2017.

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## COVID 'cures' come with warning

**PATIENTS** following up on "promising" research suggesting head lice treatment, Ivermectin, could be used to tackle COVID-19 are being urged to "think again" before buying it.

In an article posted on *The Conversation*, University of Sydney Dean of Pharmacy, Andrew McLachlan, urged health professionals and patients to take a cautious approach potential to COVID-19 cures.

"Researchers testing the head lice drug Ivermectin as a possible treatment for COVID-19 have seen promising results in lab studies," he said.

"But the research is in its early stages and the drug is yet to be tested on people with COVID-19.

"There's so much we don't know, including the right dose and delivery method for people with coronavirus infection.

"So if you're thinking of buying some just in case, think again."

McLachlan noted that data from scientists at Monash University and the Doherty Institute suggested that the drug can stop the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which causes COVID-19, from replicating.

However, he said it was "not clear



exactly how Ivermectin works" to stop the virus.

"This research on Ivermectin has been conducted in cell culture (cells grown in a laboratory) and is very preliminary," he said.

"It provides some promise, but not evidence of an effective treatment in people (yet).

"Rigorous clinical trials in people with or exposed to COVID-19 infection are needed to establish the drug works and is safe to use, and in what doses."

Over the weekend concerns about doctors and dentists potentially self-prescribing were flagged by pharmacists on Twitter.

Using the social media platform, Pharmacy Guild of Australia

Victorian Branch President, Anthony Tassone, reported a surge in demand for the drug and called on the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) and the Medical Board of Australia to make a statement on the prescribing of Ivermectin, following a similar issue relating to anti-malarial, hydroxychloroquine (PD 23 Mar).

Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) Head of Pharmacy Futures, Dan Guidone, pleaded with universities to reconsider releasing in vitro results about potential COVID-19 treatments to the media, urging them to wait until they had some clinical data.

## Pharmacists feel COVID pressure

**PHARMACISTS** around the world are being pushed to their limits as the pressure of maintaining access to medicines for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic mounts.

In a blog post on *Pharmacy In Practice*, a British pharmacist outlined the mental strain being faced on the frontline, as pharmacists working with reduced staff numbers and increasing script volumes struggle with aggressive customers belittling their efforts to support their communities.

"The abuse and insults affect our mental health and we take it all home with us," the pharmacist said.

**MEANWHILE**, the Pharmacists' Support Service will host a webinar this evening aimed at providing pharmacists with a "pandemic survival toolkit" that will include practical tips on how they can look after their wellbeing through this crisis.

[CLICK HERE](#) to register.

## COVID hits two Adelaide pharmacies

**STAFF** at two pharmacies in Adelaide's western suburbs have tested positive for COVID-19, the ABC reports.

The cases are believed to have been linked to a cluster of infections at Adelaide Airport, with the broadcaster saying the National Pharmacies store in Findon was forensically cleaned last Tue night, while 15 employees have been forced to

go into self-isolation.

Pharmaceutical Society of Australia South Australian Branch President, and National Pharmacies Chief Pharmacist, Robyn Johns, told the ABC that every person identified as a close contact of the case was being contacted and SA Health had advised them that no customers needed to be followed up.

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## Together @ home

US TV talkshow stars, Jimmy Fallon, Jimmy Kimmel and Stephen Colbert will co-host a global special event on 18 Apr to celebrate and support healthcare workers on the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The show, jointly announced by the World Health Organization and Global Citizen, will feature real experiences from doctors, nurses and families around the world, as part of a fund-raising effort to support the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund.

Members of the cast of Sesame Street will also lend a hand to unify and inspire people around the world to take meaningful action to increase support for the global COVID-19 response.

The show will be broadcast on streaming platforms including Facebook and Instagram.

## Nespolon vax comments 'alarming'

**CLAIMS** that expanding the range of locations where pharmacists can administer influenza vaccinations would be a "recipe for disaster" (*PD* yesterday), are "alarming", consultant pharmacist, Karalyn Huxhagen, says.

Responding to the comments surrounding the Victorian State Government's decision to allow pharmacist immunisers to provide flu vaccines to patients in aged care facilities and workplaces, made by Royal Australian College of General Practitioners President, Dr Harry Nespolon, the Queensland pharmacist said the GP was out of step with the drive to boost vaccination uptake.

"It's just alarming that in this time of crisis, where every health minister and every national health person, like [Chief Medical Officer] Professor Brendan Murphy, is getting up and saying, 'please go out and get your influenza vaccine as soon as you possibly can' [Nespolon says this]," Huxhagen said.



"Pharmacies are going flat-out delivering as much as we can - I did a 12-hour shift yesterday providing vaccinations.

"It's just weird that this guy is saying that expanding where we can do it is wrong.

"Nowhere in the legislation does it talk about location as being a barrier.

"In any under developed country these things are happening in tents.

"When we send our young interns and pharmacists into these

countries they're doing it on the edge of roads.

"As long as the equipment and the process is followed correctly, location is not a problem."

Huxhagen added that research had highlighted the need for vaccination services to be available in more locations to boost uptake.

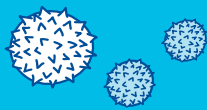
"You can't keep restricting it to just being at medical practices or opportunistically when patients come to some kind of health destination," she said.

## Flu Season 2020

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**References:** 1. Influvac Tetra Approved Product Information (last revised 28 November 2019). 2. Therapeutic Goods Administration. AIVC recommendations for the composition of influenza vaccine for Australia in 2020. <https://www.tga.gov.au/aivc-recommendations-composition-influenza-vaccine-australia-2020>. Copyright © 2020 Mylan N.V. All rights reserved. Alphapharm Pty Ltd (trading as Mylan Australia) ABN 93 002 359 739. Level 1, 30-34 Hickson Road, Millers Point NSW 2000. Tel: 1800 274 276. [www.mylan.com.au](http://www.mylan.com.au). DH MYL-001130-00. INF-2020-0024. Date of preparation: February 2020.

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## Dispensary Corner

**THE** whole world is having to adapt to a new way of living due to COVID-19 - even drug dealers.

A young man arrested in Nottinghamshire in the UK says he was carrying a large quantity of cannabis, because "I'm buying in bulk because you can't get out during the lockdown".

Police in the area also noted that while illicit substances are still a problem, hard core addicts were having trouble funding their habit because they were no longer able to burglarise houses where people are now staying home.

**AND** take a moment to pity the plight of a group of nudists in the Czech Republic, who have received a formal police reprimand for not wearing coronavirus face masks.

Media in Prague are reporting on the case last weekend where unseasonably warm weather encouraged many people to get outside and enjoy the sunshine.

Officers reported on the case (pictured) when they undertook spot checks at the Bohdanec Spa to find many people getting vitamin D all over - including bare mouths and noses.

"Citizens can be in places designed for nudity, but they must have their mouths covered," according to an official quoted in the report.



## Bandit held over robbery

**NSW** Police have charged a 40-year-old man in relation to an armed robbery at a pharmacy in Sydney's Inner West on Sun night.

Police allege, Afa Uasi, brandished an imitation pistol and threatened staff in the Pike's Day and Night Pharmacy on Burwood Road, Burwood, when he entered the store at around 5.45pm, and demanded money.

CCTV footage allowed the police to track Uasi to Redfern where he was arrested.

A search of the area nearby located a sum of cash and other items allegedly linked to incident.

Uasi appeared by audio visual link at Central Local Court yesterday where bail was not applied for and formally denied, the *Daily Telegraph* reported.

Uasi remains in custody, with the matter having been adjourned until 01 Jun.

Meanwhile, Victorian Police are appealing for public assistance in tracking down a man linked to an



attempted robbery at a pharmacy in Burwood East on 21 Mar.

Police have been told an unknown man entered the pharmacy on Burwood Highway and approached the prescription counter just after 2pm.

It is believed the offender handed the pharmacist a note making demands for medication and warning that he was armed with a knife and would hurt someone.

The pharmacist refused to hand over medication and the offender left the store empty-handed.

The offender is perceived to be Caucasian in appearance, aged in his late 20s to early 30s with a moustache and brown hair.

## FIP moves to highlight pharmacy heroes

**PHARMACISTS** on the frontline helping patients through the COVID-19 pandemic are being urged to take part in the International Pharmaceutical Federation's (FIP), Pharmacy Heroes, social media campaign.

In a video posted online FIP is calling on pharmacists to take a photo of themselves making the letter "P" and share it on Twitter and Instagram with #PharmacyHeroes and hashtagging the country they are working in.

"The patient is our focus," a voiceover on the video says.

"Our passion for helping others



is our drive.

"Knowledge is our greatest strength.

"This is the time for pharmacists.

"Pharmacists around the world are saving billions of lives."

## FIP Congress

**THE** International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) has announced a new abstract submission date of 15 May for this year's FIP World Congress.



## Guild Update

### COVID-19 and the flu vaccination

**THE** coronavirus crisis highlights how critical it is to remain as healthy as possible, to have a stronger resistance to catching it, or to recover quickly if you do catch it.

There is no vaccination for COVID-19 as yet, but there is for the flu and protecting yourself from this disease has never been more important. You need to remain as healthy as possible to reduce the likelihood of contracting COVID-19.

Thankfully it is now easier than ever to get your flu shot - just go into your local community pharmacy.

It is also important to remember that the vaccination also protects people from spreading the flu virus. Even if the person has no symptoms and are not immunised, they can still be a 'carrier'.

This means they can still spread the disease without knowing they are doing so.

So the flu shot doesn't just benefit the person who gets it, it also helps protect everyone around the person who has been vaccinated.

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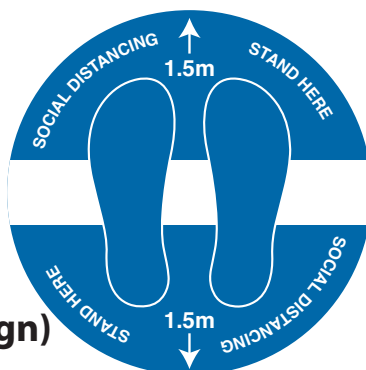
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