

Hysone shortage

ALPHAPHARM has warned that it's unable to supply HYSONE (hydrocortisone) 20mg tablets for the next four to six months.

The firm has published some alternative strategies to manage patients taking the drug in the meantime on its website at www.alphapharm.com.au.

Chinese cosmetics

AUTHORITIES in China have blacklisted several of their domestically made cosmetic products, warning that they contain chemicals which could cause skin damage.

The Ministry of Health named lotions and masks manufactured by the Guangzhou Shimei Cosmetics Co Ltd and the Gelamei Cosmetic Co Ltd.

The report said the products contain dexamethasone, also known as "skin opium" which could initially appear to produce skin improvements, but over time can make it atrophy, become thin and dark and lead to skin disease.



NATURAL WOUND MANAGEMENT

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ATTRIBUTES

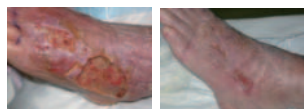
- A moist wound healing environment¹;
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 - Antibacterial barrier protection¹
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1. "A brief review of the use of honey as a clinical dressing", Miles, R.C., Primary Infection (The Australian Journal of Wound Management) 6 (6): 144-158 (1998).

2. White, R., Cooper, R. and Mojan, P. (2005). Honey: A modern wound management product. Wounds UK Limited, Aberdeen, United Kingdom.

Always read the label and use only as directed. If symptoms persist, consult your healthcare practitioner. Monitor blood sugar levels of people with Diabetes.



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British ban for Prexige

THE UK Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) this morning announced that the licence for Prexige (lumiracoxib) has been suspended, due to safety concerns about possible liver damage for patients.

The move vindicates swift action taken by Australia's Therapeutic Goods Agency some

months ago (PD 13 Aug), with the TGA leading the world in withdrawing the drug after a number of adverse reactions.

The UK withdrawal will also disappoint manufacturer Novartis which at the time of the Australian action said it had no plans to pull Prexige in other markets, and in fact insisted it would continue to push for US marketing approval for the drug.

The reactions here related to high doses of Prexige which weren't authorised in other markets, with a 100mg per day maximum allowed in the UK.

However the MHRA said that a review of the latest data showed an "increase in the number of cases of serious liver reactions that have occurred with the licensed 100mg dose, and in some cases the reactions have been associated with a short term use (less than one month)".

Health authorities in Germany and Austria have also suspended the sale and marketing of the medication.

Patients taking lumiracoxib are being urged to seek medical advice as soon as possible.

Novartis said it would continue discussions with health authorities, and "believes Prexige is a valuable treatment option for appropriate patients with osteoarthritic pain".

Howard, Rudd write

PHARMACISTS across the country are being wooed by both political parties in the lead-up to this weekend's election.

Both PM John Howard and opposition leader Kevin Rudd have written to pharmacists assuring them of their ongoing support for community pharmacy.

Skin cancer seminar

THE Qld branch of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia is running a continuing professional development session titled *Skin in the Tropics* at the Robert Douglas Auditorium, Townsville Hospital next Tue.

Speakers will include gp Greg Canning as well as Jacqui Wallace, who's a wound care consultant from Smith and Nephew.

It's free for PSA members; more info 07 3846 3811.

PBS clarifications

THERE was some consternation in the industry following our publication yesterday of details of the looming PBS price reductions, due to the omission of details of the means of administration of the drugs to which the 12.5% reduction will apply.

Cuts due to new brands will apply to the following:

- Alendronate sodium tablet (Fosamax Once Weekly, Fosamax Once Weekly, Fosamax 40mg and Fosamax Plus).
- Vancomycin powder for injection - the reduction doesn't apply to the capsules
- Fluconazole solution for IV infusion 200mg in 100mL - the reduction doesn't apply to capsules or the other IV strength
- Naltrexone Hydrochloride tablet 50mg (ReVia), down 11%
- Octreotide Acetate injection 50ug (base) in 1mL (Sandostatin 0.05), injection 100ug (base) in 1mL (Sandostatin 0.1) and injection 500ug (base) in 1mL (Sandostatin 0.5).

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DISPENSARY CORNER

LAZY husbands take note!

Researchers in the USA have found that women who want to lose extra weight gained during pregnancy should try to get more sleep.

The study of 940 women at Harvard Medical School found that mothers who slept five hours or less per day when their babies were six months old were three times more likely to have kept the weight on after a year than mothers who got seven hours of sleep or more.

"This study shows that getting enough sleep - even just two hours more - may be as important as a healthy diet and exercise for new mothers to return to their pre-pregnancy weight," said a spokeswoman.

CONTRACEPTION probably won't be necessary for Britain's oldest newly-weds, set to marry soon after a whirlwind romance.

93-year-old James Mason and his new bride, 85-year-old Peggy Clark said it was love at first sight when they met last month, and they became engaged just three days later.

Mason said: "I thought I'd better grab her when I could because we didn't want to live in sin".

LET'S hope health authorities are keeping an eye on this.

A restaurateur in Taiwan has opened a chain of 12 toilet-themed eateries.

Diners at the *Modern Toilet* restaurants sit on toilet seats and food containers are in the shape of wash basins, while napkins are dispensed from toilet rolls on each table.

Reports also say that "much of the food is made to look like human waste".

The owner claims that younger diners are attracted by the "edginess" of the eateries.



Just like eating in a toilet!