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## Digestive health

**BLACKMORES** has launched a new probiotic formula, Digestive Bio Balance.

The tablet is a chewable, berry-flavoured probiotic, designed to support healthy digestion, as well as aid patients on medications which disrupt good gut bacteria.

The tablet, containing 200 million organisms of *Lactobacillus reuteri* (Protectis), is formulated using a clinically trialled strain of probiotic, which when manufactured using Blackmores' 'ActiveSure' technology, does not require refrigeration.

"There are many myths and misunderstandings surrounding probiotics and they can adversely affect consumers' choice of products," said Blackmores Director of Education, Pam Stone.

"One of these myths is that the more bacteria in the product, the better...[however] more important than quantity is clinical proof of the quality and effectiveness of the probiotic strain.

"Similarly, different combinations of strains do not imply better efficacy, rather, it is more important to choose a product that is supported by evidence from human clinical trials on a specific strain and specific dose of probiotic," she added.

According to Blackmores, Digestive Bio Balance, presents a "real opportunity for pharmacy, with probiotics representing the fastest growing segment in the category for the past five years".

Digestive Bio Balance is now available and retails at RRP \$12.95 (10 tablets) \$29.95 (30 tablets).

## Aussie Kaletra approval

**THE** Therapeutic Goods Administration has approved Kaletra (lopinavir/ritonavir), a once-daily dosing for HIV treatment-experienced adult patients with HIV-1 infection, in combination with other antiretroviral agents.

The approval follows trials which found that daily dosings of Kaletra, a HIV protease inhibitor, had similar efficacy, safety and tolerability as twice-daily dosing in HIV patients failing their previous antiretroviral regimen.

In addition, the once daily dosing regime also resulted in increased treatment adherence and limited resistance evolution, compared to twice-daily dosing.

## Consumers generic confusion

**SIXTY-two** percent of Australians would prefer a brand name over the generic if the out-of-pocket expense was the same, according to a Public Perceptions of Generics Study released this morning.

The study was conducted by Galaxy Research in Oct after being commissioned by Nycomed Australia, and found that nine out of ten Australians who required a prescription in the past two years were offered a generic substitution, with 42% of patients accepting the offer every time, and 32% accepting the offer "most of the time".

"The issue of generic substitution has been misrepresented by Australia's pharmacy industry," said pharmacist, Gerald Quigley.

"Many pharmacists and pharmacy assistants are offering generics to their patients based on a price difference which might not exist, and as a result, are sending confused messages to their patients," he added.

The study's findings follow a 2009 Medicines Australia report which found that around 68% of branded medicines do not have a brand price premium.

21% of Australians, according to the Perceptions Study, also worry that generic substitution could lead to them receiving the wrong medication, whilst 24% of 18-34 year olds also reported confusion over the medication variety.

In addition, 21% of Australians do not approve of pharmacists offering generic substitutions.

This disapproval was put down to patients' trust that their doctor prescribed the right medicine, as well as a belief that a branded medication will work better than a generic.

In addition, 69% of older Australians said they prefer branded medications, whilst 16% of 18 to 34 year olds said they "don't know" their preference.

A recent Originators vs Generics online poll of 101 GPs mirrored the general ambivalence regarding generic and branded medications, with 64% of GPs saying they did not feel confident pharmacists would dispense scripts as per directions if a prescription strictly forbade substitution.

Responding to the release this morning, NPS Australia ceo Lynn Weekes told **PD** "some of the

findings of this survey reaffirm what we already knew, but there are clear biases in how this information is being presented, which we must be careful interpreting".

"For NPS, the issue is not whether the medicine is an innovator brand or a generic brand, but whether consumers understand their medicine choices and take their medicines safely," she said.

Responding to the point that pharmacists are offering generics over brands based on non-existent price differences Weekes also said "this highlights the need for individuals to be medicinewise and understand what questions to ask about their medicines to be able to make their own informed decisions. "If a pharmacist was misrepresenting prices it would be a matter for the Pharmacy Board," she added.

**MEANWHILE** Weekes confirmed that NPS would launch another awareness campaign focusing on generic medicines in April this year.

The promotion "will address what people need to know about brand substitution to make the right medicines decisions for themselves," she said.

## Another OAM

**IAN** Carrig, a third generation Adelaide pharmacist, was also named in this week's Australia Day Honours List, along with John Bronger, Stephen Shaddock and Michael Beahan (**PD** yesterday).

Carrig was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his service to music through the Adelaide Youth Orchestra.

## Pharmacy winners

**CONGRATULATIONS** to the winners of last week's Pharmacy Alliance competition: Thomas Au, Claudia Teh, Robyn Hedges, Archana Haria & Joseph Saleh.

## Retailer for Mayne

**MAYNE** Pharma Group has today announced the appointment of former Woolworths ceo Roger Corbett as its new Chairman, replacing incumbent Roger Aston who is also the firm's ceo.

Corbett is also a director of US grocery and pharmacy giant Wal-Mart Stores.

Corbett said he was "looking forward to leading the Board at a time of significant change and working with Roger Aston to take the company through the next important stages of its evolution".

## WIN AN A'KIN ANTI-OXIDANT COMPLEX



**Pharmacy Daily** has teamed up with **A'kin** this week and is giving 5 lucky readers the chance to win an A'kin Rosehip & Shea Intensive Moisture Anti-oxidant Complex valued at \$39.95.

Reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles with the help of A'kin Rosehip & Shea Intensive Moisture Anti-oxidant Complex, ideal for dry or

mature skin. The natural rich concentrations of certified organic Shea butter, Rosehip oil and penetrating Olive complex, leave skin feeling hydrated and looking youthful.

For your chance to win this great prize, simply send through the correct answer to the daily question below:

**When do you apply the A'kin Rosehip & Shea Intensive Moisture Anti-oxidant Complex?**

Email your answer to: [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au)

First correct entry received each day will win!

Hint: Visit: [www.purist.com](http://www.purist.com)

Congratulations to yesterday's lucky winner, **Hayley Fejer** from **High Tech Health**.

## Companies with heart

**HARTMANN** Australasia is offering substantial discounts on stock replenishments, as well as samples, merchandising and point of sale assistance, for pharmacies and aged care facilities affected by the floods.

To take advantage of the offer, flood affected pharmacies and aged care facilities should call 1800 805 839.

And **GLAXOSMITHKLINE** has also today announced extended credit terms for flood-affected pharmacies in Queensland and northern New South Wales.

GSK said the company would extend its current payment terms to 90 days from statement for all retail pharmacy orders made during Feb 2011 through Qld and northern NSW major wholesaler distribution centres.

GSK also contributed \$100,000 to the Queensland Premier's Flood Relief Appeal, and initiated a staff donation program for the Royal Flying Doctors Service, which is the company's major community partner.

## CPD Calendar

**WELCOME to Pharmacy Daily's** Continuing Professional Development Calendar, featuring upcoming events and opportunities to earn CPE and CPD points.

If you have an upcoming event you'd like us to feature, email [info@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:info@pharmacydaily.com.au).

**20-29 Jan 2011:** Pharmacy Study Tour, Mammoth Mountain California and Las Vegas - [www.medic.com.au/events](http://www.medic.com.au/events).

**01 Feb:** PSA Monthly Lecture, Sexual Health and Contraception, PSA Office Suite, Greenhill Road Unley- [sa.branch@psa.org.au](mailto:sa.branch@psa.org.au).

**02 Feb:** SHPA Western Australia CE lecture on Palliative Care at 6pm, Royal Perth Hospital.

**04 Feb:** [2010 graduates] PSA Welcome to the Profession Party; Myers Place, Melbourne- [Deepak.a.p@gmail.com](mailto:Deepak.a.p@gmail.com).

**04 Feb:** MMR Stage 1 Accreditation Course; Woolloongabba, Qld- [educationqld@psa.org.au](mailto:educationqld@psa.org.au).

## New drugs up for approval

**NINE** new drugs are up for consideration as new medicines to be added to the Schedule of Pharmaceutical Benefits, according to the PBAC meeting agenda for March 2011 released yesterday.

Included in the line-up are: Movetro (cladribine) 10mg tablet for the treatment of MS; Tadim (colistimethate sodium powder) for nebuliser solution, 1 million IU (equivalent to 80 mg colistimethate sodium), for the treatment of lung infections in patients with cystic fibrosis; and Gilenya (finigolmod) capsule 0.5mg (as hydrochloride) for MS.

Other submissions include Bronchitol (mannitol) capsule containing powder for oral inhalation 40mg, for cystic fibrosis;

## Aged Care Directory

**THE** Department of Health has launched a new information directory which outlines all government services for older Australians and their families.

The *Government Directory of Services for Older People 2011*, features a user-friendly design, and covers health, options for care, legal rights, finance choices and employment.

According to the DoH, the Directory layout is simpler than it has been in recent years, with entries now "grouped," as well as having larger type and chapter tabs - free by calling 1800 500 853.

## SoundBite approval

**US PATIENTS** suffering deafness in one ear will soon be able to take advantage of the world's first non-surgical and removable hearing system, SoundBite, following its marketing approval by the Food and Drug Administration.

The SoundBite hearing system is designed to imperceptibly transmit sound via the teeth, to help people who are essentially deaf in one ear regain their spatial hearing ability.

To accomplish this end, the system uses bone conduction to deliver clear, quality sound to the inner ear.

The system is comprised of a small in-the-mouth hearing device which fits around the upper left or right back teeth, as well as a small microphone unit worn behind the ear.

Lyrica (pregabalin) capsules 25mg, 75mg, 150mg and 300mg for neuropathic pain; Serdolect (sertindole) tablets 4mg, 12mg, 16mg and 20mg for schizophrenia; Palexia SR (tapentadol hydrochloride) tablets 50mg, 100mg, 150mg, 200mg abd 250mg (as hydrochloride) for severe pain; and Twynsta (telmisartan with amlodipine) 40 mg-5 mg, 40 mg-10 mg, 80 mg-5 mg and 80 mg-10 mg (as besylate) as an antihypertensive; and Zolinza (vorinostat) capsule 100mg anti-cancer drug.

Also up for consideration are six new drug applications (for Suboxone, Docetaxel Actavis, Denpax, Ferro-Tab, Emend IV, and Oratane) relating to new forms of previously listed drugs and changes to conditions of use.

The new drug submissions are currently up for public comment until 09 February- [www.pbs.gov.au](http://www.pbs.gov.au).

## Be Medicinewise

**NPS** Australia is reminding the industry that Medicinewise week launches this Sunday.

Medicinewise Week is aimed at getting "Australians thinking more about their medicines through posing the question 'why?'; and also getting the public to understand 'what is a medicine', 'what the medicines active ingredient is', and also to educate consumers to ask the right questions.

Health professionals, according to NPS clinical adviser, Dr Danielle Stowasser, will play a vital role in the success of the campaign.

"Most people value their health professionals' opinions when it comes to making medicines decisions, so you are key to helping them become medicinewise," she said.

"You can do this through educating people about the active ingredient in their medicines and promoting the use of medicines lists, which can be downloaded at no cost from our website," she added.

The campaign will be supported by television and radio ads, as well as the release of new research, resources and tips to help consumers be medicinewise.



## DISPENSARY CORNER

**WINDOW** no match for weight.

A world-famous sumo wrestler, Tamawashi, has made world headlines after an evening meal led to an arm injury.

According to reports, Tamawashi was enjoying a quiet meal and a rest, when the window he was leaning against gave way under the pressure of his hefty 150kgs.

## WHOOOPS!

A 34-year old Aussie is facing charges after he was sacked on Australia Day for drunkenness.

According to reports, the man, a delivery driver, was so incensed with having been given the flick that he called his union, who advised him to rock up to the police station for a breath test.

Despite protesting that they didn't want to get involved in a civil dispute between the man and his employer, the police caved to the man's protestations and breath tested him.

The resulting reading of 0.53 (just over the legal limit in Darwin) meant that he was then arrested for drunk-driving.

Following his arrest, police checked the man's drivers license, and discovered that he had been suspended from driving since December 2010.

**SOME** enterprising Mexican smugglers have attempted to bypass customs officers, sniffer dogs and body pat-downs by creating a massive "medieval catapult" (pictured below) to fling drugs across the US border.

Police just south of Arizona have seized 23kg of marijuana and a "metal-framed catapult" complete with a massive elastic band, mounted on a trailer next to the international border fence.



One way to get a real drug high...