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## Flu vax age standardisation needed

**PHARMACISTS** across the country should be allowed to provide influenza vaccines to children aged 10 and older, to combat this year's high infection rate, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia believes.

Responding to a call to increase flu vaccination uptake, published on the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners' *newsGP* website, Acting Guild National President, Trent Twomey, said Federal, State and Territory Health Ministers agreed that a nationally consistent approach to pharmacist administered vaccination was desirable, at a COAG Health Council meeting in Oct.

"Western Australia announced last month that pharmacists would be allowed to immunise children aged 10 years and older against influenza," he said.

"This is a positive step in battling a killer influenza season but there still remains much to be done to harmonise vaccination in pharmacy

in all the states and territories.

"Pharmacists in Tasmania are able also to vaccinate from the age of 10 years for influenza vaccine and this is evidence, if any is needed, that 10 years should be the minimum age across the country to ensure increased rates of vaccination to endure herd immunity.

"Getting vaccinated in pharmacies makes sense.

"People get vaccinated in pharmacy because it is easily accessible, including after hours and weekends, and an appointment is usually not required."

Twomey described the "inconsistency of regulations" across the country as "a nonsense".

"We must rectify it so that we can give communities across the whole country maximum opportunity to visit their pharmacy to be vaccinated and protected against the flu," he said.

To date more than 250 people have died from the flu virus in Australia this year.



There have been over 130,000 laboratory confirmed cases of the virus nationwide to 08 Jul, more than double the 12-month figure for 2018, with growing concerns that the H3N2 strain of the virus has mutated, impacting the potential efficacy of vaccines.

Figures from the WA Department of Health indicate a slowdown in the rate of confirmed cases of the infection, with weekly data showing there were fewer than 2,500 new cases in the seven days to 09 Jul, down from a high of 3,839 a week.

### Today's issue of *PD*

*Pharmacy Daily* today has three pages of news including our weekly **Health & Beauty** feature and a full page from **Eagle Shared Services**.

### Allergy Show

**ADVANTAGE** Group says it will be the only pharmacy organisation to take part in the upcoming Allergy Show, providing a "pharmacy voice" at the event this weekend at the Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Advantage CEO, Steven Kastrinakis, said the company was invited to participate by Asthma Australia, with a qualified team of pharmacists set to be on hand to offer advice, education and support.

Taking part in the show complements Advantage's range of allergy-focused services including Asthma Care Clinics, Hay fever and Allergy Care Plans, with "extensive training materials for all member pharmacies to keep abreast of current thinking in this space," Kastrinakis said.

"We want to ensure that the public know that pharmacists are here as their front line of support when it comes to allergy and asthma management".

The group's brands include Advantage Pharmacy and Chemist Discount Centre.

### Health economics vaccine failure

**THE** way Australian health economists have been forced to value vaccines places the country behind other OECD nations and devalues the role of vaccines, especially in the long-term, according to a new report from GlaxoSmithKline (GSK).

At The Economics of Prevention event hosted this week by the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA),

GSK launched a policy paper entitled 'The Value of Vaccines – ensuring Australia keeps pace with community values and international practice'.

GSK Vaccines Medical Director, Dr Bishoy Rizkalla, argued that the long-term impact of vaccines justified a lower cost-effectiveness threshold, urging a review to account for costs and benefits to the wider economy.

### Eagle is flying

**EAGLE** Shared Services is today highlighting its suite of offerings for pharmacies, inviting businesses to outsource their back office so they can "focus on what's important".

Payroll, bookkeeping, accounting, IT projects, budgets, consulting and business coaching are all part of the service - see **page four**.

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## Star Combo buys Bio-E

**ASX-LISTED** complementary medicine manufacturer, Star Combo, has entered a purchase agreement with Melbourne-based natural health, food and beauty business, Bio-E for \$60 million.

The deal will see a \$42 million cash payment, plus 30 million Star Combo shares, valued at \$0.60 per share, representing a purchase price of 4.1 times Bio-E's earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA).

Star Combo said the decision to buy Bio-E was in line with its strategy to grow its branded sales and product capability, providing "an opportunity to combine the strong (TGA licenced) manufacturing and product development capabilities of Star Combo and the marketing and distribution expertise of Bio-E".

The two companies have been working in collaboration to produce a "sleep diet" product "aimed at improving sleep and weight loss", which has generated more than \$10 million-worth of orders since its launch in May, Star Combo Chair, Richard Allely said.

"This is a transformational acquisition for Star Combo and accelerates our transition from a contract manufacturing business to a fast growth, high margin branded business," he said.

"We first met Bio-E when we developed and formulated the new sleep diet product for them. Both companies quickly recognised the significant synergies by combining our business and bring our complementary skill sets together.

"Star Combo's Living Healthy brand is gain traction in Australia and is now on shelves in China... and we are expecting to launch up to five new products in FY20."



The company is undertaking a capital raising exercise to fund the cash component of the deal, with a \$50 million placement of professional and sophisticated investors at \$0.55 per share, and a share purchase plan to raise a further \$1 million at \$0.56 per share to existing Australian and New Zealand shareholders.

Star Combo is a significant supplier to TerryWhite Chemmart, having last year signed a strategic marketing and supply agreement with the network for the Living Healthy supplement brand, which is exclusively available at over 450 TWC stores nationwide.

The agreement with TWC includes a requirement that each pharmacy "prominently feature" Living Healthy products, and includes \$10 million in marketing contributions over four years, including sponsorship of the TWC annual conference (PD 16 May 2018).

Bio-E's lead product is "Lemon + Manuka" with Star Combo noting the company's "deliberate focus on working with local Australian/ Chinese distributors to land product in China through legitimate channels," rather than relying on the higher risk Daigou market.

## New headache device gets NICE tick

**BRITAIN'S** National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has recommended the use of a hand-held electronic gadget that may be used to help prevent and treat cluster headaches. Draft guidance published by

NICE this week endorses the "gammaCore" device which works by delivering a small electric current to stimulate the vagus nerve through the skin of the neck, modifying pain signals in some patients.



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## Blooms, Ascensia join forces



**LAST** weekend Ascensia Diabetes Care partnered with Blooms The Chemist to upgrade the blood glucose meters of hundreds of attendees at Diabetes NSW/ACT's Live Your Life event in Sydney.

The partnership saw Ascensia offering its Contour Next One and Contour Next meters for free, while participants were able to talk to a pharmacist along with additional services.

"This partnership means that people with diabetes can obtain strips and lancets when they receive the meter, ensuring that they have all the components and knowledge to monitor

their diabetes on the day," said Ascensia Diabetes Care Country Manager, Bodil Worm.

"Living with diabetes is a full-time job, and we want to support people to have easier days by using our Contour Next range of meters which bring you readings you can trust every time," he said.

Blooms The Chemist CEO Phil Smith said the group provides NDSS supplies through over 90 access points nationally, along with providing day-to-day support for those living with diabetes through health checks, diabetes medication reviews and other in-store services.

The Blooms and Ascensia team are **pictured** above at the Live Your Life event on Sun.

## Win with ULTRASENSITIVE

This week Pharmacy Daily and ecostore are giving readers the chance to win a prize pack of products from ecostore's ULTRASENSITIVE home and body range, valued at over \$50.



Convert your home to an asthma and allergy-aware space with ecostore's ULTRASENSITIVE home and body range, approved by Sensitive Choice for Australians with sensitivities. **CLICK HERE** for more.

To win, be the first from WA to send the correct answer to the question to [comp@pharmacydaily.com.au](mailto:comp@pharmacydaily.com.au).

What are 3 key benefits of ecostore's ULTRASENSITIVE home and body care range?

*Congratulations to yesterday's winner, Lauren Moran.*

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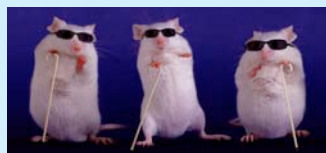
## Dispensary Corner

**SORRY** kids, the old favourite nursery rhyme "Three Blind Mice" may have to have its tail cut off.

US researchers at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, have been able to help the retinas of blind mice restructure themselves into regaining normal responses to light, using gene therapy.

This is important because the death of rod photoreceptors in the retina is a major cause of human blindness, with researchers saying these abnormalities can be reversed in people who previously had no hope of regaining sight.

So, "three blind mice went for their gene therapy and were able to dodge the farmer's wife's blade" ... hmmm, doesn't quite have the same ring to it.



**HERE'S** another version (source unknown):

"A trio of retinally-challenged rodents: observe the manner of their perambulatory hyperactivity; observe same; they all pursue the agriculturalist's spouse, who in turn, forcefully indulges in a violent extrication of their cordal appendages; did you ever witness such a dramatic turn of events, as a trio of retinally-reticent rodents?"

Hmmm - same problem - no music to it, and overstated.

## NZ melatonin reclassification

**PHARMACISTS** in New Zealand will be able to supply melatonin tablets up to 3mg in strength without a prescription, under new arrangements which have reclassified the medication from "prescription only" to "prescription except when".

Conditions for the pharmacist supply require that the melatonin be dispensed "for the treatment of primary insomnia for adults aged 55 years or older for up to 13 weeks," and that the pharmacist be registered in New Zealand and have completed training required by the Pharmacy Council and the Pharmaceutical Society of NZ.

The move was recommended late last year by NZ's Medsafe Medicines Classification Committee, and was last week

ratified by the Minister's Delegate.

The new NZ classification for melatonin is "prescription except when supplied in medicines for oral use containing 3mg or less per immediate release dose unit, or 2mg or less per modified release dose unit, when sold in the manufacturer's original pack".

Currently the only approved medicine containing melatonin in NZ is Circadin, supplied by Aspen Pharmacare.

Although the new arrangements are effective immediately, the requisite courses for pharmacists to dispense melatonin are still under development, with a screening tool which will help determine whether patients are eligible.

The training is expected to be available by Sep this year.

## Supplements not always good

**WHILE** many supplement medicines have evidence-based science behind them, there are some vitamins, supplements and dietary interventions that do not seem to help, according to a US review of studies.

Researchers at West Virginia University looked at 16 supplements and 8 dietary interventions, such as the Mediterranean diet, and found only a few with clear evidence that they help avoid mortal and cardiovascular events in adults.

Omega-3s and folic acid were positive exceptions along with reduced salt intake.

See the study at [annals.org](http://annals.org).

# HEALTH & BEAUTY

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



## URICIL - the new 2-in-1 solution

Looking for something truly innovative for your pharmacy? Introducing **URICIL**, a 2-in-1 urinary alkaliser and antibacterial. Uricil can not only help relieve the symptoms of uncomplicated cystitis (UTIs), it can also reduce its occurrence. This is driven primarily through Uricil's key ingredients, curcumin and potassium citrate. Curcumin, an active in the modified turmeric extract, helps to relieve the inflammatory response of the bladder when cystitis occurs. It is also an antibacterial and a potent anti-oxidant to help fight infection, while the addition of potassium citrate makes the urine less acidic.

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**RRP:** \$18.99 (24s) or \$22.99 (48s)

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

If symptoms persist, seek the advice of a health professional.

Consult your doctor if pain or irritation persists for more than 48 hours or you notice blood in your urine.



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## Our Difference

As a Shared Service provider we offer a single contact point while integrating many moving parts (potentially many individual software packages and professional contacts).

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- Document Management
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- Business Coaching
- IT Project Management
- Ordering and Automated Order Calendars
- Micro Consulting and Consulting
- Group Consolidations



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