

Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features two pages of news.

Lead warning for Ayurvedic meds

THE Victorian Department of Health has issued a warning about lead and other heavy metals in Ayurvedic medicines.

The Department continues to receive notifications of lead poisoning resulting from contaminated imported products, with some also containing other heavy metals, such as mercury and arsenic, or other ingredients that are scheduled poisons.

The department said some of these ingredients are prohibited for supply and use in Australia because they pose a danger to human health.

Some groups, including children or pregnant women, may be at higher risk.

An 'AUST R' or 'AUST L' number on the packaging of products indicates that they are safe and can be legally supplied in Australia.

Ayurvedic medicines purchased or imported from overseas, or purchased within Australia where the product does not have this number, may carry a risk to health.

The department recommends that people avoid buying and stop taking Ayurvedic medicines that do not have an 'AUST R' or 'AUST L' on the packaging.

CFS renews partnership with Guild

CORPORATE Financial Services' partnership with the Pharmacy Guild of Australia, providing finance broking and business consulting services for Guild members, has been renewed following a recent tender process.

CFS was first appointed four years ago, and provides strategic financial advice for buying and selling pharmacies, broking services for commercial property loans, business loans and equipment financing, as well as home mortgages and car loans for pharmacists and their families.

Richard Gorman, the Managing Director and founder of CFS, has been involved in pharmacy for over 40 years, and oversees all aspects of the business in conjunction with General Manager Michael Clark and his executive team.

Now holding a significant share of the market, Gorman told *Pharmacy Daily* that CFS' connection with the Guild over the last few years has meant "we get an opportunity to put something back".

This is particularly so when it comes to broking fees - an area he is passionate about.

"We went in and cut the fees -

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where some brokers were charging three or four percent, we charged under two percent."

Gorman also provides guest lectures to pharmacy students, and encourages students to embrace business management education in their degree program so they are better prepared when it comes time to set up their business.

"The critical thing is for them to get it right and not to rush in, because this is a decision that's going to cost a lot of money.

"If they get it right, they're going to be set for life.

"If they get it wrong, they're going to be chasing their proverbial tail for the next 10 years, and that is what we are trying to avoid when educating the younger ones coming out," Gorman explained.

His long association with pharmacy is one Gorman has "enjoyed immensely", and he has worked 'cradle to grave' with some pharmacists - helping them to set up and then, come time to retire, ensuring the business is sold to the right person, "one who will protect the legacy of the person selling".

"Dealing with the front line of community health has been an

honour, and I've been very lucky," Gorman said.

"Most pharmacists are decent people and genuinely want to help the community.

"So we look after pharmacists' financial affairs and they can look after the community's health." KB



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Dispensary Corner

A TV doctor in the UK is promoting a tasty weapon in the battle against high blood cholesterol - and there's no prescription needed.

It's tomato juice.

The juice is rich in lycopenes, which work by inhibiting the LDL cholesterol that leads to hardening of the arteries.

The benefits of lycopene have been known for some time, with tomato sauce, pasta sauce and pizza topping on the list of useful dietary additions.

Tomato juice offers a potentially more convenient and likely healthier way of consuming the required amount of the good stuff.

Japanese research in 2019 found that drinking 200mL of tomato juice per day lowered blood pressure and cholesterol in people at increased risk of the condition.

And in 2011, Australian researchers, who analysed 14 studies on the benefits of lycopene, went so far as to say tomatoes could be an 'effective alternative' to statins, with just 50 grams of tomato paste or half a litre of juice a day enough to help many patients.

Speaking on the BBC's *Good Morning Live*, Dr Ranj Singh suggested viewers choose unsalted tomato juice, adding that a virgin bloody Mary "might be a great idea".

He also urged people with high cholesterol to increase their intake of whole grains to improve their fibre and help boost the gut.

Free pregnancy RSV vax

THE Australian Government has announced that its program to provide eligible pregnant women with free access to the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine Abrysvo will commence 03 Feb.

The initiative, which was announced last year (*PD* 12 Nov 2024), provides women who are 28 to 36 weeks pregnant with the free vaccine, which would otherwise cost \$300, to protect their newborn babies from serious illness.

As a vaccine listed on the NIP, funding of the administration of the vaccine by community pharmacists will be covered under the NIP Vaccination in Pharmacy (NIPVIP) Program in participating community pharmacies.

Pharmacists in most states are permitted to administer the RSV vaccine to pregnant women.

"Almost all infants will get RSV in their first two years," said Health Minister Mark Butler.

"Thanks to the Australian Government, from 03 Feb, mums and their newborn bubs will have free access to the best and most comprehensive protection against RSV," he said, adding that this is "a world-leading approach to reduce the impact of RSV on babies".

The initiative has been welcomed by medical professionals and immunisation peak bodies.

"Maternal immunisation is a well-established public health approach to help protect newborns from infectious diseases," said Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology



Steve Robson.

"Since infants are at the highest risk of severe RSV disease and complications during the first six months of life, maternal immunisation provides the first opportunity to help protect babies against RSV disease.

"It is anticipated that through RSV vaccinations, around 10,000 babies will avoid hospitalisation each year as an impact of RSV, and the reimbursement of Abrysvo is a positive step towards preventing this," Prof Robson said.

The Department of Health has advised that the RSV chapter of the Australian Immunisation Handbook has been updated to reflect the new National RSV Mother and Infant Protection Program.

Updates include funding statements for all pregnant women to be eligible to receive an RSV vaccine during pregnancy, and clarification for the use of nirsevimab in infants and children with conditions associated with increased risk of severe disease in their second RSV season.

See the RSV chapter [HERE](#).

Brisbane to host Microneedles 2025

BRISBANE is set to host more than 400 top immunologists, vaccine researchers, engineers, healthcare professionals and scientists at the International Healthcare Conference on Microneedles this year.

The event will be held at the Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre (BCEC) between 11 and 14 May, and will focus on microarray patch technology and its applications in transdermal delivery, diagnostics and healthcare more broadly.

The successful bid for the conference was led by University of Queensland Associate Professor David Muller and Professor Paul Young, in partnership with BCEC, and was supported by Tourism and Events Queensland (TEQ).

Learn more [HERE](#).

FDA bans red dye

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has announced a ban of red dye no.3, which is found in food, drinks and ingested drugs and gives a cherry red colour.

The controversial dye was banned from use in lipstick and other topical products, such as pain relief ointments, in 1990.

It has been linked with cancer when fed in large quantities to male rats, though the effects have not been shown in humans and other animals.

It has already been mostly banned in Australia, where it is called E127, except in certain kinds of Maraschino cherries.