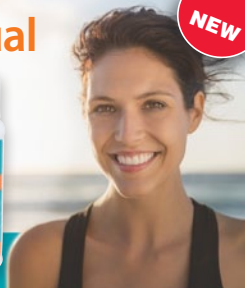


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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features five pages of news, including our Beauty & Wellness feature plus full pages from:

- Chemsave
- Craft Health

Joint call for \$19 co-payment

LEADING health and community voices including the Pharmacy Guild of Australia are calling for bipartisan support to reduce the maximum out-of-pocket cost of prescription medicine to \$19.

Other organisations include the Australian Patients Association, Asthma Australia, Family Planning Alliance Australia, QENDO, Australian Association for Adolescent Health, Wounds Australia, the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia and Advanced Pharmacy Australia.

Reducing the cost of medicine for all Australians will ease the cost burden on people struggling to afford essential medicines, striking a balance between affordability for patients and sustainability for taxpayers, saving Australians \$440 million in the first year through better managed conditions.

"Affordable, accessible medicines are key to a healthier population, and pharmacists are united in advocating for more affordable

medicines for all Australians, making sure that everyone can access the medicines they need when they need them," said PSA National President A/Prof Fei Sim. "Reducing the patient co-pay will make care more accessible, reducing the financial burden on families, and ensuring that no one has to choose between their health and their hip pocket."

AdPha President Tom Simpson said that the bipartisan support for expanding bulk billing is a great step forward, but pointed out that if the cost of medicines is not addressed, more people will continue to end up in hospitals.

"Currently, 250,000 Australians are admitted to hospitals each year due to medication-related issues, some of which can be linked to the cost of medicines," he said.

"If we truly want to reduce hospital admissions, people shouldn't also have to worry about their bank balance when purchasing essential medicines." KB

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Chronic neuropathic pain

MAGNESIUM'S ROLE IN TREATMENT

[READ ARTICLE](#)

Author: Mick Alexander - B.Pharm, B Health Sci, Naturopathy

Pharmacists thanked for stepping up

TODAY is Thank Your Pharmacist Day, and the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) is celebrating the nation's 40,000 pharmacists, recognising their dedication and impact across all areas of practice and in all corners of the country.

This year's theme, 'Pharmacists Stepping Up', highlights the growing role of pharmacists in delivering accessible, high-quality healthcare - stepping up to meet increasing demands, growing towards full scope, and improving patient outcomes in every area of practice and speciality.

With the workforce under pressure and health system demands growing, PSA National President Associate Professor Fei Sim said the day is an opportunity to acknowledge pharmacists' contributions while also advocating for a stronger, more supported profession.

"Pharmacists continue to step up to meet new challenges, delivering more vaccinations, expanding acute care services, improving medication management, and championing quality use of medicines in aged care residents," said A/Prof Sim.

"We are doing more than ever to keep Australians healthy," she continued.

"Today is an opportunity for members of our community to show up for the pharmacists that show up for you," she said, urging the community to recognise the tireless work of their local pharmacists and share a message of thanks in every interaction.

A/Prof Sim also called on policy



makers to recognise and invest in the essential role pharmacists play in our health system.

"With a federal election on the horizon, now is the time for meaningful reform to recognise and support pharmacists to practise to their full and top of scope.

"When we step up together, as a united profession, we drive real change." *KB*

Health Minister to address APP

THE Pharmacy Guild of Australia, Queensland, has announced that the Hon Tim Nicholls, Minister for Health and Ambulance Services in Queensland, will address delegates at APP2025.

He will present a keynote address on Fri 21 Mar, offering insights into the current landscape of healthcare policy, and the future direction of community pharmacy in Qld.

"Minister Nicholls' participation underscores the importance of collaboration between government and the pharmacy sector in advancing healthcare outcomes for all Australians," said APP Chairman, Kos Sclavos.

APP2025 is expected to be the biggest conference yet, with over 7,000 delegates, and more than 100 expert speakers. See the program [HERE](#).

Compound with Craft

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1. Goodman C et al. *BMJ Open* 2021;11(8):e043054. 2. Merenstein D et al. *Nutrients* 2021;13(8):2814. 3. Szajewska H, Kołodziej M. *Aliment Pharmacol Ther* 2015;42(7):793-801. 4. Can M et al. *Med Sci Monit* 2006 Apr;12(4):PI19-22.



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Editor's Choice: Happy Kat post-partum personal care

HAPPY Kat is the first pharmacy-ready postpartum recovery pack designed to make post-birth healing simple, accessible and stress-free.

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wash bottle, a gentle, easy-to-use way to stay clean and comfortable; soft, absorbent, and leak-proof reusable breast pads and soothing witch hazel wipes, which are naturally calming and cooling for perineal recovery.

For stockist enquiries contact sales@happykat.com.au.

Skin hydration crisis



A **NEW** study by skincare brand Neutrogena has revealed the physical toll air travel is taking on skin health, with nearly 81% of Aussie frequent flyers saying they experienced skin dehydration.

According to Neutrogena's Hydration Report, released today, people flying three or more times per year are more likely to experience dry skin due to prolonged exposure to cabin air and disrupted sleeping patterns.

The report surveyed 1,023 Australians 18 years and over, with results showing women are more affected by dry skin than men.

Air-conditioned and heated indoor spaces were singled out as the biggest culprits, with younger generations - Gen Z, Millennials and Gen X - more likely to experience skin dehydration due to lifestyle factors such as frequent travel, stress and long work hours.

Four in five respondents said dry skin leaves them feeling uncomfortable in their skin and less confident in their appearance.

Neutrogena skin expert Jayde Taylor said there are steps that can be taken to minimise dehydration including using a moisturiser regularly, especially one featuring hyaluronic acid, avoiding hot showers and using gentle cleansers.

Weleda now at CWH

NATURAL beauty brand Weleda is thrilled to announce that its Skin Food range, Calendula Baby Care products and Baby Teething Powder are now available at Chemist Warehouse.

"This partnership makes it easier for more Australians to conveniently purchase their favourite products when visiting their local pharmacy," said Charmaine Pichler, Managing Director of Weleda Australia.



Bondi Sands innovates even faster tan foam



BONDI Sands has introduced a world-first express formula, all new Ultra Express Self Tanning Foam (RRP \$27.95).

Demonstrating why it is Australia's number one self tan brand, Ultra Express delivers full colour results in just one hour,

making it the ideal solution for time poor self tanners.

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Are you coeliac aware?

WITH up to 80% of Australians living with undiagnosed coeliac disease, Coeliac Awareness Week, which starts today, shines a light on this critical health condition to drive better awareness - and pharmacists are well-placed to spot early signs of it.

“Unfortunately, there is a high level of misunderstanding about coeliac disease in Australia,” said dietitian Dr Kim Faulkner-Hogg, Senior Health Advocacy Officer at peak body Coeliac Australia.

Dr Faulkner-Hogg explained that underdiagnosis is an unintended consequence of this misunderstanding, and means that those living with milder symptoms and are unaware they have the condition continue to eat gluten.

“This persistent damage to the gut lining results in nutrient malabsorption, which increases the chance of those with mild symptoms developing other medical conditions and chronic health problems,” she said.

Coeliac Australia is coordinating a national education campaign as part of Coeliac Awareness Week from 13 to 20 Mar.

A key goal will be to address the fact that coeliac disease is a bit of a ‘chameleon’, said Dr Faulkner-Hogg, and its signs and symptoms are shared with numerous other conditions, making it challenging to unmask at times.

She explained that coeliac disease is a serious auto-immune condition, not simply a gluten-free dietary preference, as many people mistakenly think - and “autoimmune conditions love company”.

“A recent study listed autoimmune thyroid disease, type 1 diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, psoriasis and rheumatoid arthritis as the five top autoimmune diseases found in 31% people with coeliac disease.

“As a result, we are encouraging more people to get tested, even if they only suffer from some of the



more common symptoms.”

To help increase the diagnosis rate, Coeliac Australia encourages people to use a simple online test available on its website.

This tool can help assess whether they may need to visit their GP for further screening tests.

“This test is beneficial whether someone is experiencing specific symptoms like discomfort, fatigue, headaches, or trouble focusing after eating gluten-containing foods, or even if they have no symptoms at all but have other autoimmune conditions, a recently broken bone, are struggling to conceive or have a family member who has been diagnosed with the condition,” she said.

Pharmacists may encounter customers with gastrointestinal symptoms like diarrhoea, steatorrhoea (fatty stools) and bloating, or fatigue, which are common manifestations of coeliac disease.

When patients seek medications or supplements for these symptoms, pharmacists can ask further questions to assess for potential coeliac disease and, if appropriate, refer patients to their doctor or a specialist for proper diagnosis and management.

They can also assist patients in identifying gluten-containing medications and supplements, and recommend alternatives.

For more info and to do the test, see Coeliac Australia’s website [HERE](#).

Webinar: Asthma handbook update

THE Australian Asthma Handbook has been revised and updated, and now recommends anti-inflammatory reliever only therapy or maintenance-and-reliever therapy for adults and adolescents.

The National Asthma Council Australia (NAC) Guidelines Committee undertook an extensive overview of the latest asthma guidelines from around the world, resulting in practical recommendations for Australian primary care based on the best available evidence.

It will be released in Jun 2025.

“The most critical take-home message for health professionals is to prescribe anti-inflammatory treatment from day one when it comes to asthma in adults and adolescents,” said Clinical Associate Professor Debbie Rigby, pharmacist and NAC Clinical Executive Lead.

“The NAC is calling on all health professionals to stop prescribing or advising treatment with as-needed short-acting beta2 agonists (SABA) alone to manage asthma in adults and adolescents - inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) are indicated for all adults and adolescents with asthma.

“We know that many Australians are managing their own asthma just with over-the-counter salbutamol, even though it is no longer recommended in guidelines for prescribers.

“As-needed SABA alone is inadequate treatment for asthma in adults or adolescents and is associated with a higher risk of severe asthma exacerbations, compared with low dose ICS-containing treatment,” she said.

Pharmacists and other health professionals can get a preview of the new national guidelines for asthma management in primary care for adults and adolescents in a Praxhub webinar next week, on Tue 18 Mar.

During the webinar, Assoc Prof Rigby will outline the risks of over-reliance on SABA reliever with no anti-inflammatory treatment to manage the underlying disease.

The webinar will also outline environmental considerations, including the impact of inhalers, as well as the impact of sub-optimal asthma management.

Consultant paediatrician Dr Mike Forrester and leading GP educator Dr Anita Munoz will also feature in the webinar and there will be a live Q&A segment with the expert panel.

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Dispensary Corner

CHEAP, colourful and delicious, many find it hard to resist a slushie on a hot summer's day - but you might want to think twice before you hit up the \$2.7/11 refills next time.

Researchers in the UK believe public health advice on the icy beverages needs to be revised, after analysing 21 cases of acutely ill kids linked to drinking glycerol-containing slushies.

Their findings, published in the journal *Archives of Disease in Childhood*, show that in each case, the child became very unwell with a cluster of symptoms within an hour of drinking the beverage, which the researchers refer to as glycerol intoxication syndrome.

Slurping up too much slushie in a short amount of time can cause headaches, nausea and vomiting in young children, potentially leading to shock, low blood sugar and fainting.

"There is poor transparency around slush ice drink glycerol concentration; estimating a safe dose is therefore not easy," the researchers said.

"It is also likely that speed and dose of ingestion, along with other aspects, such as whether the drink is consumed alongside a meal...or consumed after high-intensity exercise, may be contributing factors."

The study authors concluded that slushie consumption safety recommendations should be based on weight rather than age, or alternatively, for the recommended age threshold to be raised to eight years old, upon from four years old.

Helping AYA cancer survivors thrive

A team of Australian researchers at Prince of Wales Hospital and UNSW Sydney has launched a groundbreaking two-year study to better understand and address the psychological and cognitive challenges faced by adolescent and young adult (AYA) cancer survivors aged 15-25.

The research, funded by a \$242,000 grant from the Prince of Wales Hospital Foundation, aims to bridge the gap between oncology and primary care by ensuring young survivors do not just survive cancer, but thrive beyond treatment.

Research shows that one in four young cancer survivors experience clinically significant mental health issues, and up to 53% report cognitive impairments that affect their ability to study, work and engage in everyday life.

Many survivors struggle in silence post-treatment, and pharmacists play a crucial role in medication adherence, side-effect management and health literacy.

As frontline healthcare providers, pharmacists and pharmacy assistants can play a critical role in the long-term care of young cancer survivors, yet there is currently no structured model to identify those at highest risk of mental health and cognitive difficulties.

The study's final outcomes will provide a structured model to help pharmacists and pharmacy assistants identify at-risk survivors and guide referrals for tailored survivorship care.

"Our research will not only benefit young Australians, it could also have a global impact on the way we care for cancer survivors," said study lead Associate Professor Ursula Sansom-Daly of UNSW Sydney.



"By partnering with survivors, we will create a model that allows for timely access to the support they need, tailored to their individual experiences."

The research team is currently calling on pharmacists to recommend young cancer survivors enrol in the study.

For more information or to participate, contact the Sydney Youth Cancer Service on (02) 9382 5161.

Antidepressants are not the solution for people suffering from back pain

ANTIDEPRESSANTS have little to no benefit for back pain and sciatica, researchers from Neuroscience Australia (NeuRA) and the University of NSW (UNSW) have found.

According to the study published in the Cochrane Library, antidepressants may do more harm than good for people with low back pain, which impacts more than four million Australians.

Researchers reviewed evidence from 26 randomised controlled trials involving more than 2,900 participants with low back pain or sciatica, that tested an antidepressant medicine.

The results showed that one class of antidepressant medicines reduce back pain intensity and improve function, although effects were trivial.

"We found that one class of antidepressants might provide back pain relief, but the effects are small and come with an increased risk of unwanted side effects," explained lead author and doctoral candidate at Centre for Pain IMPACT, NeuRA, and the School of Health Sciences UNSW, Michael Ferraro.

The findings also showed with that tricyclic antidepressants likely have little to no effect on low back

pain, and for sciatica specifically, the evidence was too preliminary to allow any conclusions.

"The long-term benefits and harms of most antidepressants for low back pain and sciatica remain unknown," Ferraro said.

"Large, high-quality clinical trials of serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitors and tricyclic antidepressants are urgently needed to inform treatment of sciatica," the study concluded.

Researchers hope their findings may inform future clinical guidelines and help clinicians and patients to make better decisions about their treatment.

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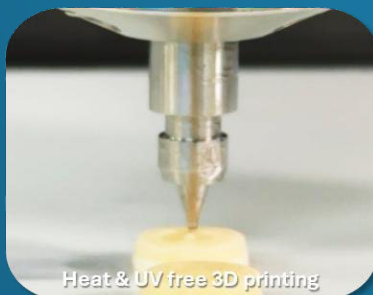
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