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## Today's issue of PD

*Pharmacy Daily* today features three pages of industry news, plus a full page from **MediChoice**.

## The right choice

**NOVA** Pharmaceuticals' MediChoice range of analgesics and cough and cold remedies are a cost-effective solution for winter ills. See **p4** for a special deal.

## Code of ethics

**THE** Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA) is reminding pharmacists to contribute to the public consultation on its draft revised Code of Ethics for Pharmacists, with consultation closing 17 Apr 2026. The Code articulates the values of the pharmacy profession and expected ethical standards - more **HERE**.

# Non-PBS meds hurting hip pockets

**THE** government's landmark Cheaper Medicines policy has been a major success, but many Australians are still missing out on the benefits because they are being prescribed medicines that are not on the PBS, new research from the McKell Institute has revealed.

McKell's report *Still Out of Pocket* found 43% of people surveyed were prescribed medicines not listed on the PBS in the past three years, including those for dermatology or skin conditions (21%), pain management or chronic pain (19%), diabetes and obesity management (16%), mental health medication (10%) and contraceptives (10%). Affordability issues meant 24% of those people did not purchase the medicine at all, while 16% said they were forced to go without essentials, like food and groceries, to afford it.

The survey was conducted in Nov 2025, and included around 1,500 Australian voters.

Overall, more than one in five

people surveyed (22%) said they had delayed filling a prescription due to cost, while 18% did not fill the prescription at all and 15% skipped a dose to make their medication last longer.

Other measures included taking expired medication rather than filling a new script (12%), while 11% took less than the prescribed amount to make it last longer.

McKell Institute chief executive Edward Cavanough said the findings revealed a massive gap in Australia's medicines policy.

"The Albanese Government deserves credit for the Cheaper Medicines reform which has delivered genuine relief to millions of people, but this research shows that the policy isn't helping almost half of all Australians," Cavanough said.

"Nearly half of all Australians are prescribed medicines that aren't on the PBS, and for many of them, the situation is dire.

"When people are taking expired



medication because they can't afford to refill their script, it quickly changes from a minor policy gap into a serious public health problem."

Cavanough noted that the government has demonstrated it is willing to take bold action on medicines policy, and suggested there was strong support to take it further.

"Our research shows voters want more ambitious action from government - 89% support increased investment in the PBS to ensure more medicines are available at an affordable price," Cavanough said.

"It's clear the public is ready for the next stage of reform."

Read the report here. **KB**

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## Board releases new safe practice guide

**THE** Pharmacy Board of Australia has released new guidelines supporting safe practice by pharmacists delivering pharmacy services, which will come into effect on 01 Oct 2026.

Following extensive consultation with pharmacists, professional bodies and the public to inform their development (**PD** 26 Aug 2025), the guidelines set out the Board's expectations of pharmacists in relation to the provision of pharmacy services, including medicines and advice.

Key changes to previous guidelines include consolidating the existing four separate guidelines into a single document with four focus areas: leadership/management in practice; supporting informed patient choice; confidentiality and privacy; and communication in practice.

There is also a clearer focus on the importance of cultural safety in the safe provision of services, and updates to reflect contemporary practice.

The guidelines are designed to work in accordance with other relevant professional practice standards, legislation and other guidelines published by the Board, as well as the National Boards' Shared Code of Conduct.

The Pharmacy Board has published supporting resources to complement the guidelines, including notes on references for pharmacists, following the removal of the mandated list of reference texts.

There is also a suite of practice scenarios that illustrate how the guidelines can be applied in day-to-day practice across different settings.

Access the *Guidelines for pharmacists on the safe provision of pharmacy services including medicines and advice* **HERE**.

## New HCP resources for asthma care

**NATIONAL** Asthma Council Australia has released new resources for primary care health professionals that provide summary information on key topics identified in the updated Australian Asthma Handbook, which was published last year (**PD** 17 Sep 2025).

Designed to be used in conjunction with the handbook, the information sheets provide a concise reference for the diagnosis and management of asthma and include primary questions to be considered, quick reference tables and key messages to communicate to patients.

The five topic sheets are titled:

- *Overcoming Australia's over-reliance on 'blue puffers' for asthma*
- *Anti-inflammatory reliever is the recommended starting treatment for asthma*
- *Maintenance-and-reliever therapy for asthma*
- *Oral corticosteroid use in asthma: what's safe and appropriate?*
- *Triple therapy for asthma in primary care.*

Pharmacist and Clinical Associate Professor Debbie Rigby, clinical executive lead at NAC, said following the launch of the updated guidelines last year, this is an opportune time to produce this resource for primary care health professionals.

"Suboptimal asthma control is prevalent in Australia and greater awareness of evidence-based guidelines and options for best practice management will help alleviate poorly controlled asthma in the community," Associate Professor Rigby explained.

"The therapeutic approach to asthma has changed over the last decade, with a focus on alleviating chronic inflammation in the airways, not just addressing symptoms," she added.

"The recommendations to avoid SABA-only treatment and shift towards inhaled corticosteroids (ICS-containing) therapy for all adults and adolescents requires substantial education and behaviour changes for patients.



"These resources will support clinicians with the implementation of the guidelines," she said.

Assoc Prof Rigby stressed that while the information sheets provide a handy summary of key recommendations and information, for detailed guidance on asthma care, the Australian Asthma Handbook should be consulted.

Access the resources **HERE**.

## People on GLP-1RAs low on protein

**ALMOST** nine in 10 people taking GLP-1 weight loss drugs semaglutide and tirzepatide may not be meeting their recommended daily protein intake, according to new research to be presented at this year's European Congress on Obesity (ECO) in Turkey.

A team from Italy analysed more than 5,700 days of data from 332 consenting adults with overweight or obesity using a mobile dietary tracking app, comparing those taking GLP-1 RAs with those who were not.

The analysis found that participants using GLP-1 RA drugs reported significantly lower total energy intake compared with non-users (average 1,102 vs 1,281 kcal/day) as well as significantly lower intake of macronutrients, including protein, carbohydrates and fat.

The weight-adjusted daily protein intake was critically low

in GLP-1 RA users at 0.6g/kg/day, with the majority (88%) falling below the Italian national recommendation for protein intake of 0.9g/kg/day.

Those not taking the weight loss drugs also fell short of the national guidelines at 0.7g/kg/day, with the researchers suggesting that inadequate protein consumption is a concern regardless of the weight loss strategy employed.

"Real-world GLP-1 RA use in adults with overweight or obesity is associated with widespread protein inadequacy and increased meal skipping, underscoring the urgent need for proactive nutritional monitoring and personalised dietary guidance to be integrated alongside obesity treatment to support long-term health beyond weight loss," said lead author Dr Valentina Vinelli from Vita-Salute San Raffaele University in Milan.

# NOT JUST FLU. THERE'S WHOOPING COUGH TOO

Ask about a  
**DOUBLE  
SHOT**  
Help prevent whooping  
cough as well as the flu<sup>1</sup>

1. Australian Government. Department of Health, Disability and Ageing. Australian Immunisation Handbook. Available at <https://immunisationhandbook.health.gov.au>. Accessed March 2026.  
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## Dispensary Corner

**IF YOU** were trying to come up with a great new product to strengthen teeth and prevent decay, you probably wouldn't start with sugar.

But that's exactly what some scientists in Brazil have done.

The team from the Bauru School of Dentistry at the University of Sao Paulo have developed an artificial saliva using a lab-modified sugarcane protein called CANECP1-5 (okay, so it's not *exactly* sugar...).

CANECP1-5 binds directly to tooth enamel, creating a protective layer over teeth and helping to defend enamel from acids found in drinks like juice and alcohol, as well as acids from the stomach.

Testing showed that the artificial saliva reduced bacterial activity and slowed tooth demineralisation, the process by which teeth lose calcium and phosphate, making them more susceptible to cavities.

It has been trialed in a number of forms, including a gel and mouthwash, and appears to work best when combined with fluoride and xylitol.

The product was developed to help people with head and neck cancer, who often experience severe cavities due to the destruction of salivary glands after radiation therapy.

"Artificial saliva improves the sensation of dry mouth and sores," explained project lead Professor Marilia Afonso Rabelo Buzalaf, adding that it helps with oral discomfort and also combats bacteria.

## CWH goes all in at AFL Gather Round

**CHEMIST** Warehouse is bringing four days of entertainment, giveaways and immersive fan moments for this year's AFL Gather Round, offering fans an unforgettable experience in Adelaide this weekend.

Gather Round 2026, which started yesterday and continues until Sun 12 Apr, features all 18 teams playing nine round five matches in South Australia, with games held at Adelaide Oval, Norwood Oval, and Barossa Park (Lyndoch).

The event coincides with the school holidays and includes a "festival of footy" featuring community events, music and food.

As a long-standing AFL partner, Chemist Warehouse is going all in for its fourth Gather Round, with an interactive hub designed to keep fans moving, cheering

and celebrating the game they love.

Along with leading partner brands Colgate, Cetaphil, Deep Heat and Gello Beans, the Performance House at Elder Park will deliver an extensive program of experiences, blending footy skills, fun challenges and exclusive giveaways across the festival.

Chemist Warehouse has also created the CW VIP Deck at Adelaide Oval, offering some lucky fans with premium viewing, full game access and hospitality.

South Australian Community Umpires have also been invited to join the CW VIP Deck as special guests, in recognition of their commitment and the vital role they play in the sport.



"Gather Round is one of the most exciting moments on the AFL calendar, and for us, it's all about creating an experience that brings fans closer to the action," said deputy CEO of retail, Mario Tascone.

"We're proud to be all in on this major event and create memorable, fan-first experiences across the weekend," he concluded. *KB*

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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

### Revive Tears - PBS-listed

Revive Tears lubricating eye drops provide long lasting and soothing relief against burning, irritation and discomfort due to dry eye.

The product moisturises, comforts and refreshes dry, tired and strained eyes.

Revive Tears helps lubricate, hydrate and protect dry eyes.

Suitable for use with contact lenses.

Contains hypromellose 3mg/g.

**Suppliers:** Available from Symbion, Sigma, API and CH2.

**RRP:** \$4.32 (available in 10ml packs)

**Website:** [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.





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