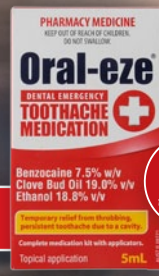


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## Today's issue of PD

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

## The right choice

THE MediChoice range of paracetamol and ibuprofen analgesics are a cost-effective solution for pain relief.

For a special deal see p4.

## Pharmacy spend grew to \$15.6b over the year.

Discover what's driving the uplift.

Read CommBank Health Insights

## Diphtheria, mpox undervaccination concerns

A GROWING outbreak of diphtheria in northern and central Australia, mainly among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, has been linked to declining vaccination rates.

More than 100 cases have been notified nationally in 2026 to date, mostly cutaneous infections, compared with a handful of cases in other years since the introduction of diphtheria vaccination on the NIP.

While the vaccine protects against severe toxin-mediated disease, vaccinated people can still carry bacteria in their nose and throat and transmit it to other people.

In addition to being on the lookout for potential diphtheria cases in patients with compatible symptoms, health professionals are urged to ensure First Nations patients and other at-risk groups



are up-to-date with diphtheria vaccinations, while travellers to affected areas could consider a booster if appropriate.

MEANWHILE, new research from the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance has estimated that mpox vax coverage among men who have sex with men is far lower than previously reported, potentially leaving at-risk populations vulnerable to future outbreaks.

There were 1,579 reported mpox

cases in Australia between 2022 and 2024 - 144 in 2022, followed by a much larger outbreak of 1,409 cases in 2024.

Despite the availability of publicly funded mpox vaccination since 2022, the team estimated that two-dose vaccination coverage in the target population was between 9.6% and 15.0%.

Pharmacists in ACT, NSW, Queensland, SA and Victoria can provide mpox vaccinations. KB

## Scripty adds safety net insights feature

DIGITAL health company Oxa has launched Safety Net Insights in its free digital script wallet app Scripty, allowing consumers to see when their medication refills may count toward their PBS Safety Net threshold - and when they may not.

The feature provides users with a suggested refill date based on the PBS 20-day or 50-day early supply rule and the user's last dispensed date, where this is available to Scripty.

Like Scripty's medicine shortage alerts feature added last year (PD 11 Aug 2025) the Safety Net Insights takes information that already exists and surfaces it inside the Scripty app.

Oxa developed the new feature based on feedback from Scripty users managing chronic

conditions, and from pharmacists who have raised early refills as an ongoing concern.

"Health consumers using Scripty told us they wanted more clarity around their PBS Safety Net benefits, especially during these challenging economic times," said Mina Giang, Oxa co-founder and head of product and experience.

"And pharmacists have shared that one of the main reasons for cancelled orders was patients refilling too early and potentially missing out on Safety Net benefits," Giang explained.

"With Safety Net Insights, we hope to help bridge that gap, minimise cancelled orders, save time, and reduce unnecessary back and forth."

Learn more [HERE](#).

# NOT JUST FLU. THERE'S WHOOPING COUGH TOO

Ask about a **DOUBLE SHOT**

Help prevent whooping cough as well as the flu!

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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## Something BIG has just landed in Pharmacy

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## Catapres 150mcg shortage in May

### PHARMACEUTICAL

company Clinect has advised that Catapres (clonidine) 150 microgram (mcg) tablets will again be in shortage, with the Therapeutic Goods Administration extending the existing Serious Scarcity Substitution Instrument (SSSI) to 28 Jun 2026.

The anticipated shortage between 04 May and 31 May 2026 is due to an increase in demand, and follows the previous shortage that occurred between December 2025 and March 2026, when the SSSI was first implemented (PD 05 Jan).

Lower strength 100mcg tablets are still available, and the SSSI allows a pharmacist to dispense an equivalent quantity of clonidine 100mcg tablets, if appropriate, without a new prescription - more [HERE](#).

## Pharmacist role for on-time denosumab in RAC

RESEARCH from Macquarie University has revealed that one in five people in residential aged care (RAC) prescribed denosumab injections for osteoporosis have experienced missed or delayed doses, significantly increasing their risk of rapid bone loss and fractures.

In addition, almost all residents who stopped denosumab treatment (more than 98%) were not given follow-on bisphosphonate therapy, as per recommendations in clinical guidelines.

The medication must be given every six months, and missing or delaying a dose can lead to vertebral fractures in as little as 30 days.

Researchers analysed the medication records of more than 10,600 RAC residents across Australia between 2018-2022 and found that 20% of people prescribed denosumab experienced doses that were delayed beyond recommended timeframes.

The study team said that the findings challenge the assumption

that once a medicine is prescribed in an aged care home, it will be given correctly and safely.

Pharmacist and lead author Marea O'Donnell, from the Australian Institute of Health Innovation at Macquarie University, noted that the problem is not with the medication, but with the health system that supports its use.

"Denosumab treatment requires a six-monthly injection, and the logistics of timely ordering and supply can be complex in residential aged care," O'Donnell explained.

The team concluded that better coordination across RAC and hospitals, and a stronger role for aged care pharmacists, could help ensure injections are given on time and that safe replacement therapy is initiated if treatment stops.

"In the Australian RAC, there are several opportunities for pharmacists to support denosumab dosing and cessation guideline



adherence," the study authors wrote in the *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*.

"Firstly, the pharmacy supplying medicines to RAC can ensure stock availability for timely dosing, and follow-up with GPs regarding bisphosphonate replacement when denosumab is ceased.

"Secondly, RAC homes have access to clinical pharmacy services that can support monitoring of adherence to osteoporosis treatment guidelines, as well as provide education for prescribers and carers."

Read the paper [HERE](#). KB

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## Dispensary Corner

**CROCODILES** do it, dogs do it, foetuses do it, and bored teenagers famously do it - but nobody really knows why.

However, thanks to new research that is anything but a big yawn, Australian researchers think they have uncovered the physiological function of yawning.

An imaging study from UNSW Sydney suggests yawning may help move fluids in and out of the brain, clearing waste fluids from the area.

Using real-time MRI scans, the team compared what happens inside the head of people yawning versus simply breathing deeply.

They found that yawning triggered a specific manoeuvre in which cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) and venous blood moved out of the skull together, whereas during deep breathing CSF flowed into the skull.

Although the researchers acknowledge the idea is speculative, they say their work introduces an interesting avenue for understanding the physiological functions of yawning.

The finding could also be important for further studies into neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and dementia - all of which have been potentially linked to the build-up of waste products in and around the brain that can result from impaired CSF flows.

Unfortunately pretending to yawn did not work, so it might be time to get yourself comfy and watch some paint dry.

## PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

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

### New Product Launch - APOHEALTH Levonorgestrel 1.5mg 1 tablet

APOHEALTH Levonorgestrel 1.5mg is an oral emergency contraceptive indicated for use within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse. It should be used only as an emergency measure.

Women who present for repeated courses of emergency contraception should be advised to consider long-term methods of contraception.

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Hartley's Gripe Water is a natural blend of herbal ingredients including dill seed oil, peppermint oil, chamomile and coriander oil. These herbs have been used safely in commercial infant preparations for many years.

The product helps reduce the occurrence of excess intestinal wind and gas in infants, and helps relieve the symptoms of infant colic. It does not contain artificial sweeteners.

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