



Australian Government
Department of Health
and Aged Care

TODAY'S NEWS

Monday, 8th July 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **[7news.com.au \(online\)](#)** reports families of children with neuroblastoma have called on the federal government to make DFMO more readily available in Australia. In a statement, Health Minister Mark Butler said, "We are doing everything we can, as quickly as we can, to work with the supplier of DFMO and provide some relief to children and families battling neuroblastoma."
- **[National Indigenous Times \(online\)](#)** reports Assistant Indigenous Health Minister Malarndirri McCarthy has joined Indigenous Australians Minister Linda Burney and Aboriginal health organisations to launch a series of regional forums and face-to-face consultations that will inform the development of a national strategy for food security in remote First Nations communities.
- **[The Sydney Morning Herald \(page 4\)](#)** reports two new urgent care clinics in Sydney's Green Square and Belmore will open on July 15, to alleviate pressure on emergency departments dealing with a rise in new influenza cases.
- **[The West Australian \(page 3\)](#)** reports the Therapeutic Goods Administration is currently evaluating the risk factors for Andrographis allergy and whether over-the-counter supplements containing the ingredient need stronger label warnings.

- [**The Gold Coast Bulletin \(page 2\)**](#) reports the Queensland Government will provide nearly \$21 million in funding for an additional 22 fulltime nurses, midwives, social workers and senior medical officers to boost access to abortion services in the state. *Also reported by:* [Canberra Times](#)
- [**The Burnie Advocate \(page 8\)**](#) reports Tasmania's opposition has urged the state government not to follow through with further cuts to health staff, while the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation says nearly 1,000 vacant nursing and midwifery positions exist across the state.
- [**The Daily Telegraph \(online\)**](#) reports Australian authorities have expressed concern at the rise in illicit drugs containing the synthetic opioid Nitazene, which is 1000 times more potent than morphine.

MINISTER BUTLER

Families plead to make life-saving drug for Neuroblastoma available in Australia: 'My child's life is on the line'

7news.com.au, Other, 07/07/2024, Amber Laidler

Neuroblastoma is an aggressive, often deadly cancer impacting roughly 50 Australian children each year. [...] "The federal government, Health Minister Mark Butler, could actually make that access available today if he chose to," she says.

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Pharmacies will soon be able to supply vapes without prescription: how might it work in practice?

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 08/07/2024, Coral Gartner, Samuel Brookfield, Kathryn Steadman and Lisa Nissen

Pharmacists will be able to supply therapeutic vaping products without a prescription from October 2024. [...] To secure support from the Greens for the next stage of vaping regulation reforms, the Health Minister, the Hon Mark Butler, agreed to amend the Therapeutic Goods and Other Legislation Amendment (Vaping Reforms) Bill 2024 to remove the prescription requirement for supply of therapeutic vaping products.

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Channel 7, Seven News (Weekend), 07/07/2024, Mark Ferguson

Desperate Australian families are racing the clock and breaking the bank to access life-saving cancer treatment for their children. Groundbreaking therapies that could be available here are caught up in red tape, forcing many to head overseas. Lucy Jones, Neuroblastoma Australia, says children with the disease do not have the time and they are encouraging the Federal Government particularly Health Minister Mark Butler to hopefully provide access to treatment as soon as possible.

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MINISTER WELLS

Critic's view

Sydney Morning Herald, TV Guide, 08/07/2024, Page 9

Along with many Australians, Maggie Beer was shocked and dismayed by the findings of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. [...] It's a visit by the Minister for Aged Care, Anika Wells, who will assess the changes to determine if they're suitable for broader application.

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Maggie Beer's Big Mission: July 9

ABC factual series Maggie Beer's Big Mission premieres this week with Maggie Beer in an ambitious world first social experiment to transform the meals and dining experience at an aged care home in WA. [...] Maggie meets with care change consultants Elizabeth and Julie to discuss their plans for a new buffet dining experience, and she invites the Federal Minister for Aged Care Anika Wells to visit in four months to see what's been achieved.

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCBRIDE

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ASSISTANT MINISTER MCCARTHY

Consultations to improve food security in remote communities set to begin

National Indigenous Times, Other, 07/07/2024, Dechlan Brennan

The Federal Government has announced their intention to address food scarcity in remote First Nations communities. [...] Assistant Indigenous Minister Malarndirri McCarthy said: "In remote communities, grocery prices can be double or triple the price in comparison to suburban stores with access to healthy food being more limited, and supply chains more often disrupted by extreme weather events."

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DEPARTMENT

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CORONAVIRUS

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AGEING AND AGED CARE

Family alleges chemical restraint without consent at Tasmanian government-run aged care facility

ABC Online, Other, 07/07/2024

Maurice Long walked into a government-operated aged care facility in Tasmania. Within about two months, he was dead. [...] The family filed complaints to the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency, the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission and Tasmania's Health Department.

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'I just want to be able to get my vibrator out': the fight for sexual rights in Australia's aged care homes

The Guardian, Other, 07/07/2024, Kate Lyons

Midway through the Q&A section of a webinar on older people's sexual rights, a woman named Beverley asks whether aged care providers can confiscate residents' sex toys. The question is deftly handled by one of the experts, Dr Catherine Barrett from Celebrate Ageing, who gently asks, "I wonder why you would want to remove those items?"

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Urgent reform needed to support home-based aged care

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 08/07/2024, Maria C Inacio, Stephanie L Harrison, Keith Evans and Gilian Caughey

Current home-based long term care models are inadequate to support older people to stay at home and out of hospital. [...] The current national emphasis on delivering more accessible, timely, person-centered home care can mostly be attributed to the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (2018–21) and the resulting Australian Government Aged Care Reforms (2021–ongoing).

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POPULATION HEALTH

'Don't let the abusers get victims' super'

The Australian, General News, 08/07/2024, Stephen Rice, Page 1

Labor frontbencher Tanya Plibersek has asked Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus to consider a grieving mother's plea for reform of superannuation laws, following revelations that a domestic violence abuser was awarded a \$65,000 payout when his wife took her own life. [...] There were 46 female domestic homicide victims across Australia in 2022-23 with most killed by an intimate partner: one woman killed every 11 days, according to the latest data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

Also reported by: [The Australian \(Online\)](#).

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ACT takes steps on safe injecting room

Canberra Times, General News, 08/07/2024, Lucy Bladen, Page 3

A medically supervised injecting room in the ACT will be considered as part of a review into drug harm reduction measures. The ACT Health Directorate is commissioning a review to examine the model for a supervised injecting facility in the territory.

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Master secret to ageing

Courier Mail, General News, 08/07/2024, Jackie Sinnerton, Page 7

In an extraordinary breakthrough, Queensland researchers have unlocked the secrets of ageing, paving the way to extending the quality of life. Until now, the process of how genes change from birth to adulthood and into old age has been largely unknown, but University of Queensland scientists have discovered the crucial molecular secrets of ageing in cells.

Also reported by: [Hobart Mercury \(Hobart\)](#).

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Married, kids? Swift is a power without either

Northern Territory News, General News, 08/07/2024, Susie O'Brien, Page 13

Travis Kelce, Taylor Swift's boyfriend, is a bad role model for young boys. [...] The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reports that one quarter of Australian women will never have children and by 2031 the number of couples without children will overtake those with children.

Also reported by: [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Toowoomba\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Cairns\)](#), [Gold Coast Bulletin \(Gold Coast\)](#)

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'How did this happen?': Calls for deaths in custody database to be expanded after prison miscarriage

9News, Other, 07/07/2024, Miriah Davis

In an outdoor communal area at Dillwynia women's prison in Sydney's west, authorities discovered evidence of a pre-term miscarriage. [...] According to a 2022 report published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 164 women received into custody in 2021 were pregnant.

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From banning junk food ads to a sugar tax: With diabetes on the rise, we can't afford to ignore the evidence any longer

The New Daily, Other, 07/07/2024, Gary Sacks

There are renewed calls this week for the Australian government to implement a range of measures aimed at improving our diets. These include restrictions on junk food advertising, improvements to food labelling, and a levy on sugary drinks.

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Diabetes rates hit crisis point

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 08/07/2024, Caitlin Wright

Two recent startling reports have shone a light onto the diabetes epidemic, with experts hoping significant change will follow. Last week saw the release of a report arising out of the federal parliamentary inquiry into diabetes, with 23 recommendations to strengthen the government's response to diabetes and obesity.

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4BC, Weekends, 07/07/2024, Peter Fegan

Fegan mentions that new data from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare shows that COVID-19 was named of the top five killers of Australians above lung cancer. He states that this is the first time in 50 years that an infectious disease was on the deadly list.

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CANCER, HEARING AND CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Plea for licence change on weed

Herald Sun, General News, 08/07/2024, Mitch Clarke, Page 8

A terminally ill woman is spearheading a campaign calling for medicinal cannabis users to have a legal defence that would let them drive without fear of losing their licences. Alison Shaw was diagnosed with advanced cervical cancer in 2021.

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Talc is 'probably' cancer-causing

Townsville Bulletin, General News, 08/07/2024, Page 3

The World Health Organisation's cancer agency on Friday classified talc as "probably carcinogenic" for humans. The decision was based on "limited evidence" talc could cause ovarian cancer in humans,

"sufficient evidence" it was linked to cancer in rats and "strong mechanistic evidence" that it shows carcinogenic signs in human cells, the WHO's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) said.

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Complex blood cancer cases forecast to rise in Australia

Canberra Times, General News, 08/07/2024, Katelyn Catanzariti, Page 5

The number of Australians being diagnosed with a complex blood cancer is forecast to rise sharply over the next 25 years, new research shows. Some 80,000 people will have contracted multiple myeloma by 2043, an increase of nearly 15 per cent on previous predictions. Mortality rates are projected to fall by about 27.5 per cent, according to a study led by the Daffodil Centre in a joint venture between Cancer Council NSW and the University of Sydney.

Also reported by: [Kalgoorlie Miner \(Kalgoorlie\)](#), [The Border Mail \(Online\)](#), [Ballarat Courier \(Online\)](#), [Illawarra Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#), [The Senior \(Online\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Daily Mail Australia \(Online\)](#), [Border Mail \(Albury-Wodonga\)](#), [Newcastle Herald \(Newcastle\)](#), and syndicated widely across Australian Community Media regional online

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'All ages, all walks of life': incurable cancer in focus for Ballarat study

Ballarat Courier, Other, 07/07/2024, Melanie Whelan

Medical oncologist Geoffrey Chong is deep in investigating a cancer that health experts are "not great at predicting who might get it". His work is to help introduce a safe and effective chemotherapy-free treatment for those who do develop the disease.

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PRIMARY CARE

Extra clinics to open as rising flu cases strain hospitals

Sydney Morning Herald, General News, 08/07/2024, Alexandra Smith, Page 4

Two new urgent care clinics will open in Sydney's inner south next week in a bid to ease increasing pressure on the city's emergency departments, as the number of new influenza cases continues to rise rapidly. The latest NSW Health respiratory report, for the week ending June 29, reveals a 35 per cent increase in influenza cases in one week, with the bulk in young people aged under 16.

Also reported by: [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#).

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State to boost abortion services with \$20m funding

Gold Coast Bulletin, General News, 08/07/2024, Isabella Pesch, Page 2

The state government will allocate \$20.78m to boost access to abortion services in Queensland, Health Minister Shannon Fentiman has announced. The investment will be used to recruit an additional 22 fulltime nurses, midwives, social workers and senior medical officers across the state.

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Funding, staff boost for Qld abortion services

Canberra Times, General News, 08/07/2024, Keira Jenkins, Page 9

Abortion services in Queensland will receive more than \$20 million to improve access for women seeking to terminate a pregnancy and to increase the sector's workforce. Health services across Queensland will use the funding to recruit 22 full-time nurses, midwives, social workers and senior medical officers.

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Here to stay but on the move

It's helped more than 10,000 Warrnambool people since it opened a year ago and, despite fears Priority Primary Care Centres were earmarked for the chop, the state government says it's not going anywhere. Warrnambool's centre is, however, looking for a new home.

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An unhealthy situation

Border Mail, General News, 08/07/2024, Blair Thomson, Page 1

Medical experts have painted a dire picture of the region's health services as concerns and anger over a flawed plan to revamp Albury's hospital were aired at a rally. About 200 attendees at Sunday's Better Border Health event were told Albury Wodonga Health was 30 to 45 beds short for patients each day.

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'It's a big worry'

Warrnambool Standard, General News, 08/07/2024, Katrina Lovell, Page 1

Concerns have been raised about ramping at Warrnambool Base Hospital, with a paramedic confirming it was a common occurrence. The Standard was contacted by Terang resident Paul Herry after a family member had gone to the hospital last Saturday and was surprised how busy it was and faced a long wait to be seen.

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WA Liberals commit to building Tom Price Hospital in first term of government

West Australian, Other, 07/07/2024, Oliver Lane

The long delayed construction of a new Tom Price Hospital will be delivered within one term in office of a WA Liberal government, party leader Libby Mettam has promised. Ms Mettam announced the bold plan on Sunday morning, with the Pilbara hospital upgrade having barely moved since Mark McGowan pledged \$32.

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Origin of youth program funds queried

Burnie Advocate, General News, 08/07/2024, Helen Kempton, Page 2

Few in the community would have any qualms about the state government funding a mental health service for our young people - many in fact want more money to go to that sector. But questions are being asked about the funding stream used by the government to pay for the new Youth Peer Mental Health and Wellbeing Program targeted at people aged between 14 and 24.

Also reported by: [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#).

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Childhood emotional abuse is amongst the most damaging for mental health and cases are on the rise

ABC Online, Other, 07/07/2024, Alison Branley

Tet James' childhood memories are chequered with flashes of breaking into houses with his dad and sitting on drugs during police raids. But, he says, the enduring memory is one of love.

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Race and disadvantage: major factors for involuntary psychiatric admission

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 08/07/2024, Amy Corderoy

New Australian research shows the extent of the use of involuntary psychiatric admission, and the risk

that it may be imposed disproportionately on some patient groups. Involuntary hospital admission is a treatment we like to think of as a last resort.

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CHIEF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY OFFICE

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HEALTH WORKFORCE

Labor calls on Libs-Lambie coalition to stop health cuts

Burnie Advocate, General News, 08/07/2024, Hugh Bohane, Page 8

Labor has accused the Liberal-Lambie coalition of cutting more jobs in the healthcare industry, following Right to Information (RTI) documents which revealed more than 700 jobs were unfunded across the health system. [...] Mr Street said the government was on a recruitment drive within the health department and that next year, there will be more doctors, nurses, and paramedics on the frontline of the health system.

Also reported by: [Launceston Examiner \(Launceston\)](#)

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Australia plans to hire more overseas doctors. Is it ethical to recruit from countries with doctor shortages?

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 08/07/2024, Hilary Bowman-Smart

Many of us have found ourselves in a full waiting room to see the GP, looking at a laminated sign about a fee increase taped to the reception desk. Australia is facing a shortage of doctors, especially GPs.

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TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT AND ACCESS

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MEDICARE BENEFITS AND DIGITAL HEALTH

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BENEFITS INTEGRITY

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HEALTH SYSTEMS STRATEGIES

Smoke and mirrors cloud new vape ban

Border Mail, General News, 08/07/2024, Editorial, Page 19

The banning of vapes from public sale and diverting their dispensing to pharmacies via prescription only has been, as expected, a well-intentioned health initiative plan fraught with many practical problems. The day after the ban came into effect, flavoured vapes were still being sold for \$50 each in the ACT, despite the veiled threat of \$2.2 million in fines and a maximum seven-year jail term for those flouting the new law.

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As Australia's reliance on imported blood plasma grows, the ethics of paid donation are back in focus

ABC Online, Other, 07/07/2024, Judd Boaz

It's a rare commodity in high demand around the world, and one that can't be imitated or duplicated. A handful of countries export billions of dollars' worth of it each year, including to Australia — which cannot generate enough supplies by itself.

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SPORT

Can the NRL pull off its biggest ever expansion?

Australian Financial Review, General News, 08/07/2024, Zoe Samios, Page 36

It must have been an odd sight. More than a dozen NRL executives and officials gathering at the Gambaro Seafood Restaurant not far from the Brisbane CBD

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Kanga Cup kicks off for thousands of budding soccer stars

Canberra Times, General News, 08/07/2024, Tim Piccione, Page 3

"it's not always about winning the game," coach John Augoustis said, proudly discussing the under 11s Hurstville City Minotaurs he has coached for the past three years. "It's about leaving it on the field and it's up to the girls at the end of the day. If they come off the field with a sweaty smile, that's all I need."

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HEALTH ECONOMICS AND RESEARCH

Australia could be a world leader in living evidence synthesis

Medical Journal of Australia, Other, 08/07/2024, Annika Howells

Australia is poised to be a world leader in the field of living evidence synthesis, prompting calls for a national research agenda. In a perspective article published in the Medical Journal of Australia, researchers from the Australian Living Evidence Collaboration at Monash University have called for a national research agenda for translating living evidence into health policy.

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FIRST NATIONS HEALTH

Rescue chopper's new look for NAIDOC

Northern Territory News, General News, 08/07/2024, Harry Brill, Page 7

Ahead of NAIDOC week, an aeromedical service has coated one of its NT rescue helicopters in

Indigenous artwork, with a view to reinforce the organisation's commitment to reconciliation. On Friday, CareFlight revealed one of its Top End choppers had been refashioned with symbolic artwork, designed by Yorta Yorta and Gunnai man Dixon Patten.

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DV hub for Indigenous

Cairns Post, General News, 08/07/2024, Page 7

A new phase of the federal government's campaign aimed at tackling domestic violence towards women has included a First Nations resource hub with material encouraging respect and open conversations. The Stop it at the Start campaign was launched in 2016 but now a website containing content to raise awareness of domestic violence within First Nations families and communities can be accessed.

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Plan to rein in pricey groceries in remote communities

West Australian, Other, 08/07/2024, Poppy Johnston

Remote communities tend to fork out much more on their weekly shop than their urban counterparts, putting pressure on First Nation communities. That's prompted the federal government to pull together a strategy for food security in remote Indigenous communities, with consultation to start this week and a final plan expected in two years.

Also reported by: [Canberra Times \(Online\)](#).

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INTERIM AUSTRALIAN CDC

Health chief warns return to school will worsen current Qld spike in viruses

Sydney Morning Herald, Other, 07/07/2024, Courtney Kruk

The state's chief health officer has warned Queenslanders to prepare for a spike in illnesses as children return to school and COVID-19, flu and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) cases continue to climb. Dr John Gerrard said large parts of the state, particularly the south-east, are in the grip of a flu outbreak with the highest number of cases in children and influenza A of particular concern.

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Dire warning an unstoppable contagion is about to take off in Queensland in the next 24 hours - the one thing you can do to stay safe

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 07/07/2024, Lisa Edser

Health authorities have raised concerns about influenza rates in Queensland kids warning an unstoppable contagion could spread when school returns on Monday. Around 20 children are being admitted to hospital every day in the Sunshine State as influenza cases skyrocket.

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THERAPEUTIC GOODS ADMINISTRATION

Vape 'reforms' mean little with no enforcement

Sydney Morning Herald, Editorials, 08/07/2024, Editorial, Page 20

Nobody said it would be easy. Vapes and e-cigarettes have hit cities the world over like an unstoppable avalanche. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration has not issued a single fine or charge to any retailer or distributor since the federal government's ban came into effect on July 1.

Also reported by: [Sydney Morning Herald \(Online\)](#).

Alarm sounded about over-the-counter herbal capsules

West Australian, Edition Changes, 08/07/2024, Page 3

Authorities have warned about possible side effects of a popular "immunity" capsule following the shock death of a 37-year-old man in Queensland last month. Cale Agosta was suspected to have had a fatal anaphylactic reaction, allegedly after taking BioCeuticals' ArmaForce, which contains Andrographis paniculata and can be bought over the counter at pharmacies.

Also reported by: [West Australian \(Online\)](#).

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Cale Agosta died after taking a supplement anyone can buy over the counter. Now there's been a huge development after Daily Mail Australia exposed the rare side effect

Daily Mail Australia, Other, 07/07/2024, Eliza Mcphee and Freddy Pawle

The medical regulator will consider reviewing warning labels on alternative medicines after a young father allegedly died from a severe allergic reaction. [...] The Therapeutic Goods Administration will review whether current warning labels are sufficient to address safety concerns over one of the ingredients.

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OFFICE FOR DRUG CONTROL

AFP warning over rise in Nitazene opioids found in street drugs

Daily Telegraph Australia, Other, 07/07/2024, Aisling Brennan

There are calls for pill testing to be done at festivals after a mass overdose at a recent music event in Melbourne. Australian police are cracking down on deadly drugs that have been cut with the synthetic opioid Nitazene, after four people died from suspected overdoses.

Also reported by: [The Mercury \(Online\)](#), [Cairns Post \(Online\)](#), [Townsville Bulletin \(Online\)](#), [Geelong Advertiser \(Online\)](#), [Toowoomba Chronicle \(Online\)](#), [Adelaide Now \(Online\)](#), [NEWS.com.au \(Online\)](#), [The Courier Mail \(Online\)](#), [West Australian \(Online\)](#), [Kalgoorlie Miner \(Online\)](#).

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Channel 9, 60 Minutes, 07/07/2024, Dimity Clancey and Tara Brown

Two Sundays ago, we reported on the emerging threat of nitazenes highly potent synthetic opioids, which can be up to 1000 times stronger than morphine. The very day after that story was broadcast, our warning about these illicit drugs, many of which are manufactured in Chinese labs was validated in the worst possible way for people inside a home in Melbourne, including a 17 year old boy died after taking cocaine, not knowing it was laced with nitazenes.

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FOOD STANDARDS

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