

What You Need to Know

The dangers of purchasing drugs from online pharmacies, women resorting to cannabis for menopause relief, missing a monkeypox diagnosis, and more.

Cheap Chemo — Too Good To Be True?



Buyer beware—especially if you’re buying chemotherapy drugs online. Researchers surveyed online pharmacies selling imatinib, an oral drug used to manage chronic myeloid leukemia, and found that only three out of 44 English-language sites that ship within the United States were [LegitScript](#)-certified. More than half are considered “rogue” pharmacies—which means [you can’t trust in the safety or authenticity of their products](#), putting both your health and your personal information in danger.

The authors of the study, published in the *Journal of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network*, cited this as a serious patient safety issue, noting that 13 of the 44 websites didn’t even require a prescription for imatinib, and more than three-quarters did not have a way to contact a pharmacist. The problem is also much bigger than the 44 sites they reviewed, which represented only the first 10 pages of results from their search. The solution is also not easy, as patients may choose to order from these unregulated, unclassified pharmacies because they sell expensive oncology drugs at lower prices than official channels. Raising healthcare providers’ awareness of the prevalence of risky online pharmacies may help head off disaster, as well as encouraging cancer patients to speak to their pharmacist if they can’t afford their medications.

Source: Cision/PR Newswire

Patient Perspective — Candid on Cannabis



Recent research suggests that some women may be using cannabis to alleviate menopause symptoms such as stress and trouble sleeping; however, the true frequency of this practice may be overestimated, and additional research is needed.

Despite the more widespread availability of medical cannabis, **experts remind patients to check with their healthcare providers for the best treatment options**—in most cases they recommend hormone therapy as the standard of care and hemp-based products like CBD over those containing THC, the psychoactive ingredient in cannabis.

Dr. David Culpepper of LifeMD told *Healthline*, “In my experience, most of the anti-inflammatory and other health benefits patients receive from cannabis products come not from THC, but from CBD, which is a benign, non-psychoactive compound. It’s possible that women using cannabis for menopause are reaping the benefits of the CBD, while unnecessarily intoxicating themselves with THC.”

Source: Healthline

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Improving Diagnosis — Is It COVID or Monkeypox?



Countries around the world have been dealing with a new disease outbreak: monkeypox. This disease is often sexually transmitted and is both preventable with a smallpox vaccine and treatable, especially if it's caught early. A quick and accurate diagnosis can help patients avoid very painful symptoms, including genital lesions, as well as help control spread of the disease through contact tracing. Unfortunately, [monkeypox is often being missed or misdiagnosed](#), which may be one reason why there are currently more than 7,100 known cases in the United States, up from just one case in mid-May.

There are many reasons for this widespread underdiagnosis; a big one is that most healthcare providers have never seen monkeypox before and this strain is presenting differently from the “textbook” cases. Some of the disease’s early symptoms (such as fever, fatigue, headaches, and muscle aches) also resemble COVID-19, which people may be more concerned with. In addition, because monkeypox is primarily a sexually transmitted disease, patients may be embarrassed or fear the stigma associated with an infection and attempt home treatments instead. To overcome these challenges, better communication and awareness is essential so clinicians can recognize monkeypox and patients feel comfortable seeking diagnosis and treatment.

Source: Insider

Infection Prevention — New Lyme Vaccine on the Horizon



Black-legged ticks and Lyme disease have been on the rise around the United States, but the best protection people have is prevention: avoiding high-risk areas, dressing appropriately, using tick repellants, checking carefully for ticks or signs of a bite. However, [a new vaccine for Lyme disease, VLA15](#), may offer some hope and relief to those who are anxious about spending time outdoors.

Although a vaccine for dogs is currently available, the only vaccine for humans was discontinued 20 years ago due to public perception of adverse side effects and low adoption. VLA15 functions similarly to the previous offering, with some improvements in response to previous safety concerns. It is now in the third phase of clinical trials in humans, a study that involves more than 6,000 subjects age 5 and older; if successful, the manufacturers, Pfizer and Valneva, may seek U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval in 2025 to bring it to market.

That goal is still a ways off, so in the meantime, be aware of Lyme risks in your area; take precautions outside; and look out for tell-tale symptoms of the disease, including a fever, headache, and a circular “bull’s-eye” rash. Lyme can be treated with antibiotics, but can have long-term effects such as pain, fatigue, and difficulty focusing.

Source: NPR

Mental Health — Mental Illness: It's Complicated



Do genetics cause mental illness? The answer isn't that simple. Genetics certainly contribute to mental and behavioral conditions like schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and depression—but [a mix of biological, environmental, and psychological factors also help determine your risk of developing a mental illness.](#)

If mental illness runs in your family, in some cases you have an increased risk of inheriting it, but external things can trigger it as well, for example, stressful life events such as a divorce or the death of a loved one, childhood trauma and abuse, substance use, living with chronic healthcare problems.

No matter the causes, if you aren't feeling yourself, are experiencing emotional or behavioral changes for a prolonged period, or are unable to sleep and perform your usual activities, you should seek help from a mental health professional. If you are having suicidal thoughts, talk to someone immediately. You can dial the emergency number 988 to reach the national Suicide & Crisis Lifeline anywhere in the United States.

Source: Healthline

Surgery — Dental Surgery: Don't Be Scared, Be Prepared



Do you love going to the dentist? How do you feel about undergoing surgery? If you don't like either of those scenarios, you are not alone—and plenty of people have a phobia about experiencing both at once. It's called odontophobia, the fear of oral or maxillofacial surgery. It's natural to be nervous about any procedure, but you shouldn't let that prevent you from getting the care you need. [Professor Maria Papageorge of Tufts School of Dental Medicine has some tips to help you face your fears.](#)

The key is to be prepared for both the procedure and life and recovery after it. Her number one recommendation: Ask questions. The more you know about the surgery beforehand, the less anxious you'll be, but it's better to talk with your doctor than go down the internet rabbit hole. Your doctor can even connect you with former patients who can share their experience with the same treatment. Similarly, before surgery, have a plan for getting home from the procedure and stock up on the food and supplies you will need during recovery, such as soft foods. Remember: It's OK to ask for help!

Source: TuftsNow

Pediatrics — Preventing Pain for Chemo Kids

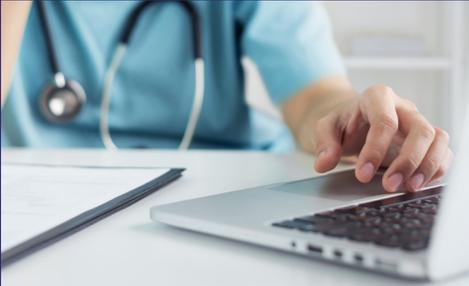


Chemotherapy can be an effective treatment for acute lymphoblastic leukemia, particularly for children, who experience higher survival rates than adults, but it can also have devastating side effects in young oncology patients. These can include nerve pain (tingling and numbness in hands and feet) associated with chemotherapy drugs, as well as gastrointestinal problems and muscle pain and weakness that make it difficult to walk—which can persist for as long as 20 years after treatment. Dr. Hana Starabova of The University of Queensland’s Institute for Molecular Bioscience is hoping to bring them some relief.

Her research, which has received grant funding from the Children’s Hospital Foundation, is [investigating anti-inflammatory drugs that can reduce the nerve damage caused by chemotherapy drugs but not their effectiveness](#) in killing cancer cells.

“It’s a fine balance—too little chemotherapy and cancer won’t be killed but sometimes the side effects are so bad, patients have to stop the therapy,” Starabova says. “I hope that by having a treatment to reduce side-effects, it will be one less thing for these kids and their families to worry about.”

Source: ThePrint



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