

NATURAL PHARMACY

B U S I N E S S

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Immune health checklist

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PHARMACY PRAISE

We launch our annual search for the best natural products – what gets your vote?

CPD fact file:

Menopause matters

An expert CPD-accredited report into menopause and the crucial role of magnesium

IN EACH ISSUE: The latest new products • Fully-referenced features from leading experts
• Company spotlight • Industry issues explained • Retail and business advice to boost the bottom line



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BUSINESS

GROWING YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF NATURAL PRODUCTS

This time of year is a special one for *Natural Pharmacy Business*, as it is in this issue that we are proud to launch our search for the best products of 2026. We run these awards to recognise the excellence within our industry, and to shine a light on those brands making natural health and nutrition products that genuinely support the health and wellbeing of your customers.

But to determine who our winners will be, we need you, the pharmacists and pharmacy teams that are working on the frontline, supporting customers' health needs and recommending these products every day. We are asking you to take the time to consider all those in the running for an award, and then to cast your vote. And your reasons can be varied, whether you like a particular formulation, or you like what the brand stands for, or perhaps it is a company that offers your pharmacy a lot of support. We look forward to hearing from you, whatever your reason. Turn to page 24, where you can find out what products are seeking your votes, and then it is over to you – all you need to do is head to www.naturalpharmacybusiness.com/awards. Voting is open until October 16, before we announce the results in our December-January issue.

Also in this issue, we are delighted to bring readers our CPD article, which is focused on the menopause and the importance of magnesium as part of your recommendations. With menopause now being such a key category for pharmacies, and women increasingly seeking more natural solutions, this article is a must-read for pharmacy staff. You can find it from page 12.



Rachel Symonds
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NATURAL PHARMACY

BUSINESS

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True Health



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COMPANY PROFILE



TRENDS



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NATURALS

Government to roll out £340m Independent Prescribing fund, but calls are issued for future investment



overnment has unveiled a £340m funding package to allow quicker access to treatments

at their local pharmacy in a bid to avoid GP referrals.

News of the roll-out of the NHS-funded Independent Prescribing is designed to bring more care closer to home, and while it has been welcomed, there are also calls for future investment to allow pharmacies to play a greater role in patient care.

The move will see qualified pharmacists deliver more NHS care, expanding Pharmacy First. Under the new contractual framework, pharmacists who hold an Independent Prescribing qualification will be able to assess patients and prescribe medicines directly, building on the success of the Pharmacy First service. This delivers on-the-spot care for common conditions and gives patients access to a wider range of medicines.

Government says the changes, which will be rolled out from autumn 2026, will reduce the number of referrals back to GPs, boosting efficiency and improving both patient experience and outcomes. It will also lessen the burden on hospitals, as patients will be able to receive further treatment for common conditions from a qualified pharmacist in their community – avoiding the need to go to an urgent treatment centre or A&E.

Minister of State for Care, Stephen Kinnock MP, commented: "Through our landmark 10 Year Health Plan, we are making the most of our highly skilled pharmacists, while boosting access to services and giving patients more care right on their doorstep. Independent Prescribing will play a major part in delivering this shift – easing pressures on GPs, cutting unnecessary red tape and helping patients get the right care closer to home."

Chief Pharmaceutical Officer for England, David Webb, continued: "This is great news for patients that community pharmacists will for the first time be able to prescribe NHS



medicines across a range of health conditions as a nationally commissioned service. Community pharmacies will be enabled to play a more integrated role in neighbourhood health teams, digitally connected and helping people access the medicines they need when they need them."

The £340m funding package and rollout of Independent Prescribing has been agreed with Community Pharmacy England.

Janet Morrison OBE, Chief Executive of Community Pharmacy England, commented: "We welcome the agreement reached for community pharmacies in 2026/27, which includes an important commitment to a programme of reform for the sector. It also opens the door to pharmacist prescribing – a first step towards making fuller use of their clinical expertise. We hope these changes, accompanied by appropriate future investment, will help pharmacies to play an even greater role in supporting patients, improving access to care, and helping people get the advice and treatment they need in their communities."

Malcolm Harrison, Chief Executive at Company Chemists' Association, added: "Today's announcement recognises the longstanding and significant economic challenges facing the sector. We welcome continued efforts to close the widely-acknowledged pharmacy funding gap. Independent prescribing is a generational opportunity to expand the care that pharmacies can provide to patients. This announcement is the first step in realising this opportunity."

£340m

Funding from Government to roll out NHS-funded Independent Prescribing

NPA calls for Government talks over pharmacy contract it calls “broken beyond repair”

The National Pharmacy Association (NPA) has called for urgent talks with the Health Secretary on what it calls an NHS pharmacy contract that is broken beyond repair and not fit for purpose.

The NPA launched a poll of members in light of a new funding deal announced by Government for the current financial year. The poll seeks to understand the impact the new deal could have on community pharmacy’s ability to invest in NHS services and the need for reform in light of record numbers of pharmacies closing in England and many others having to cut back opening hours in recent years.

The NPA said it is concerned that much of the funding increase will need to be spent on increased costs, including National Living Wage contributions, inflation and business rate rises, rather than addressing chronic under-funding. It comes as NPA analysis shows that 8.9 per cent is needed to allow pharmacy budgets to just stand still. This settlement is only 1.3 per cent higher than this.

The NPA is calling for more transparency in a system currently shrouded in secrecy with little input from pharmacies or their representative bodies.

Dr Olivier Picard, NPA Chair, said: “We hope this announcement will bring some immediate relief to pharmacies who are being hit by crippling new costs. However, we remain concerned that it does very little to close the £2.5 billion funding gap that the NHS itself identified a year ago. While this agreement contains some important measures and reduces uncertainty for the sector, it falls significantly short of the long-term investment and reform community pharmacy requires.

“Community pharmacies are ready to play a much bigger clinical role within the NHS, but ambitions for expanded patient services must be matched by sustained

funding. Independent prescribing enables pharmacists to deliver accessible, high-quality care to patients on their doorsteps. Expanding prescribing services available for patients and using the skills pharmacists have already is a common sense move. However, although this points in the right direction, it is nowhere near ambitious enough to transform patient access to care, nor make full use of pharmacists’ skills and qualifications beyond minor ailments to manage long- term conditions.

“We are also concerned that the current funding levels mean that many pharmacies will struggle to take this development forwards, risking its success. Pharmacies cannot sustain yet more loss-making work. The NPA is now seeking detailed feedback from members on how the settlement will affect frontline pharmacy services and future investment capacity. The new Health Secretary should meet us urgently so we can deliver the real reform to the frontline that patients want, pharmacies need and the Government says it is committed to delivering. It is clear that the contract between pharmacies and the NHS and the means by which it is agreed with the sector now requires urgent and fundamental reform, if the Government is to deliver on its promises.”

Dr Picard added: “The Government has listened to the NPA’s repeated calls to cover immediate rising costs and halt the threat of clawing back spending on soaring medicine prices from last year that could have further destabilised pharmacies. It’s clear the current settlement is not enough to fix a decade of underfunding. Funding needs to be delivered to pharmacies as soon as possible. Protracted negotiations would have meant many more months of instability and financial pain given the turmoil in the Government that would have left contractors in limbo.”

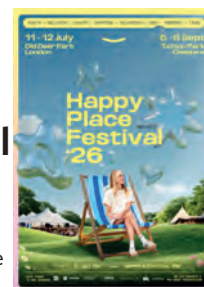
Viridian sponsors Happy Place Festival

Viridian Nutrition has been added to the sponsor line-up for the Happy Place Festival.

Viridian is a festival partner and Health Teepee sponsor for the wellness event, which was founded by TV presenter, author and podcaster, Fearne Cotton.

Taking place in July and September, the Viridian team will lead conversations on nutritional balance, whilst giving festival-goers the opportunity to explore its supplement range at their Time to Unwind stand. Nutrition Director, Aimee Benbow, and Education Manager, Phil Beard, will host talks on Sleep Better, Stress Less across the events, held in London and Cheshire.

Trade Marketing Manager, Georgia Frogley, commented: “The partnership with Fearne Cotton’s Happy Place Festival brings a shared synergy and mutual vision in helping to make a difference to our health, communities and the planet.”



Recruitment drive by Pharmacist Support

Pharmacist Support has issued a call to the profession to join as a volunteer.

The recruitment campaign invites people across the profession and beyond to champion wellbeing within pharmacy. As part of the campaign, the charity is recruiting pharmacist and lay trustees to join the Board. The charity is encouraging applications from pharmacists, as well as individuals from outside the profession who can bring valuable skills, perspectives and lived experiences.

Chair, Esther Sadler-Williams, commented: “We are committed to building a diverse and inclusive board and would warmly encourage applications from people with a broad range of backgrounds, skills and experiences, whether or not they have previous trustee experience.”

Find out more at www.pharmacistsupport.org/about-us/work-for-us/

Nine in 10

The number of high-protein snacks containing more sugar than the recommended daily limit

PDA membership increases for 23rd year

Membership of the Pharmacists Defence Association (PDA) has grown for the 23rd successive year.

Latest audited membership numbers were reported to the PDA Union AGM in June, which were for total membership as of March 31, 2026.

Mark Pitt, PDA Union General Secretary, commented: "We continue to grow year on year and our exclusive focus on pharmacists helps drive our growth and gives us significant influence. As we approach our 25th year, we are seeing more members retire; however, new joiners outnumber those retiring and therefore our net membership continues to increase. The more members we have, the greater our influence on behalf of our entire membership and we invite each employed and locum pharmacist to join us."

DR.VEGAN TO ABSORB VAT ON PMS SUPPLEMENT

DR.VEGAN is to permanently absorb the cost of VAT on its PMS Hero supplement in its commitment to making premenstrual support more accessible.

The move follows the removal of VAT on period products in 2021 after a decade-long campaign against the 'tampon tax'. However, products to support symptoms that accompany the monthly cycle – including fatigue, bloating, mood changes, cravings and discomfort – are still subject to VAT.

The brand says the campaign marks the beginning of a broader commitment to raising awareness and encouraging action around the support women need through their monthly cycle, with further initiatives planned. It follows DR.VEGAN's wider campaign message, 'It's Not That Time of the Month. It's Every Month', which challenges the idea that PMS is an occasional issue rather than a recurring experience.

Jenny Chiu, DR.VEGAN's Chief Marketing Officer, explained: "Period products became VAT-free in 2021. The supplements that help women manage what those products can't are still taxed as a luxury. That's not a position we're comfortable with, so we're absorbing the VAT ourselves until that changes. Across a typical reproductive life, women spend more than a year managing premenstrual symptoms. The idea that supporting that is a luxury is one of the more quietly absurd things our category has accepted."

Majority of parents call for clearer labelling on children's supplements

Data has revealed nine out of 10 parents want clearer labelling on kids' supplements.

The UK poll from Hiya of 1,000 parents suggest many parents are unaware that products positioned as healthy may contain meaningful levels of sugar or artificial sweeteners, revealing what Hiya is calling the 'hidden sugar loophole' in a fast-growing category.

Misunderstanding extends to regulation and labelling expectations; 72 per cent of parents think children's vitamins are required by law to clearly show sugar or artificial sweetener levels, but this is not the case. Ninety per cent agree children's vitamins should be more clearly labelled for sugar, artificial sweeteners, and additives, and 88 per cent of parents would be worried if they discovered vitamins contained as much sugar as a sweet.

Parental intent remains strongly health driven. Most parents report giving vitamins to support general health (78 per cent) or immunity (67 per cent), while others cite building healthy habits (40 per cent) or filling dietary gaps (30 per cent).

Dr Darria Long, board-certified paediatric ER physician and founder of No-Panic Parenting, commented: "Parents are doing everything they can to make healthier choices, but the reality is that most don't have clear visibility into what's actually in children's vitamins. This research shows a clear sugar gap where products marketed as 'healthy' are often misunderstood, and where most parents underestimate sugar content entirely. The overwhelming demand for clearer labelling shows this isn't about alarmism, it's about transparency. Parents want clarity, and the industry needs to catch up."

Study reveals almost 90 per cent of protein snacks contain more than recommended daily sugar

New research has revealed that almost 90 per cent of high-protein snacks contain more sugar than the NHS advises.

Researchers at Oxford Online Pharmacy analysed 88 products for sale in the UK's six largest supermarkets, including own brand. Products studied included high-protein yoghurts, milkshakes, porridge pots, bars, and coffee drinks. Many protein snacks were found to have alarming amounts of sugar; 16 per cent of products studied contain equal amounts or more sugar than protein – six of which were protein yoghurts.

NHS guidelines recommend that adults should consume no more than five per cent of their daily calories from free sugars, but 77 out of the 88 products (almost 90 per cent) exceed this. Protein milkshakes were the worst offenders, with an average of 33 per cent of calories coming from sugar. Two milkshakes contained more than an adult's full recommended daily intake in a single serving, with nearly half of their calories derived from sugar. Protein coffees came second, with 32 per cent of calories coming from sugar on average and protein yoghurts in third (26 per cent). Protein bars had the lowest portion of calories from sugar at seven per cent, but many use artificial sweeteners in place of sugar. These include sucralose, acesulfame K (Ace-K), maltitol, sorbitol, erythritol, and stevia.

Robert Bradshaw, Superintendent Pharmacist at Oxford Online Pharmacy, commented: "Consumers should be aware that a snack labelled as high-protein is not automatically healthy. This is where 'protein-washing' can become a problem, as people think they're eating a healthy diet but could be, unbeknownst to them, consuming large quantities of sugar alongside protein."

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The percentage of funding needed to allow pharmacy budgets to just stand still, according to NPA analysis

Online pharmacy records one million customer milestone

A former Boots pharmacist is celebrating as his online health provider surpassed £70m in revenue.

Cloud Pharmacy, a digital-first healthcare provider, has announced a landmark achievement, surpassing one million customers as it celebrates its 10th anniversary. Founded in 2016 by Nazmul Kadir (*pictured*), who is Superintendent Pharmacist, to make healthcare more accessible, the company has transformed from a weekend operation, to recording £70m in revenue.

Cloud Pharmacy was established to address critical gaps within the NHS. Identifying the difficulty patients faced in accessing sexual health treatments and contraceptives, Kadir built a service that prioritised patient care defined not by price, but by a commitment to safety, ethics, and clinical excellence. The health provider also specialises in weight loss management and general health for men and women. Through its 'Cloud Care' model and a dedicated Maintenance Hub, patients receive expert-led support to transition from medication to permanent, healthy management, such as treating weight loss as a long-term health journey.

"This 10-year journey has been about proving that healthcare can be delivered with both digital agility and deep clinical integrity," Nazmul commented. "Reaching one million patients is a testament to our team's commitment to providing a service that supports the overstretched NHS by empowering patients to take control of their preventative health."



Crime prevention tech launches to pharmacy

New crime prevention technology is to be made available to pharmacists.

Facewatch, a provider of Live Facial Recognition (LFR) technology, is to extend its crime prevention reach to the UK pharmacy industry. The move comes against a backdrop of mounting concern about rising crime, with the National Pharmacy Association warning of increasing incidents of theft, aggression and threats towards frontline pharmacy teams.

The company is unveiling Facewatch PharmacyProtect, which will make its debut at The Pharmacy Show in October, where industry is invited to see a live demonstration of the system.

Facewatch says it believes the pharmacy sector faces a distinct set of crime risks that set it apart from general retail, including targeted theft of prescription and OTC medicines, increasing repeat offending by organised crime networks, and a pattern of confrontation and abuse

directed at staff who are often working in high-footfall environments with limited security infrastructure.

Nick Fisher, CEO at Facewatch, explained: "Community pharmacies are on the frontline of both healthcare delivery and retail crime, particularly the rise in organised crime, which we have seen rise sharply in recent years in the wider retail sector. What we are bringing to the pharmacy sector is not new; it is a proven system that is already helping retailers across the UK identify repeat offenders, prevent crime and protect staff before incidents escalate."

Facewatch operates as a Data Controller under UK GDPR and provides live facial recognition technology, alerting store teams when individuals previously involved in criminal behaviour enter a protected store. In 2025, the system generated more than 500,000 alerts of known offenders.

Poll finds almost half of women ignore anxiety symptoms

A pharmacist is urging women not to dismiss the signs of anxiety as new research reveals nearly half ignore symptoms.

The findings, from a survey commissioned by Kalms Herbal Remedies, reveals nearly half of UK women (44 per cent) ignore feelings of anxiety and simply push through – but this approach may be impacting their sleep, relationships and even careers.

It was also found that 57 per cent experience mild anxiety at least once a week, with 13 per cent feeling anxious multiple times a day – compared with eight per cent of men. While many women describe these symptoms as 'mild', the impact tells a different story. It starts with sleep: two in five women (42 per cent) say anxiety keeps them awake and half (50 per cent) admit poor sleep leaves them irritable or short-tempered the next day. Tension spills into daily functioning: 41 per cent struggle to focus on routine tasks, affecting productivity and decision-making, before confidence takes a hit: 39 per cent feel less confident at work or socially – and for eight per cent, anxiety has negatively impacted career progression.

Pharmacist, Thorrun Govind, former Chair of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society, sees the impact of ignored anxiety every day and explains why ignoring symptoms can backfire.

"I regularly speak to women who are feeling tired, overwhelmed and not quite themselves, particularly during busy or demanding periods of life. These experiences are often brushed aside as part of everyday pressures, which can mean people delay taking time to look after their wellbeing.

"With nearly half of women pushing through, it's important to break that cycle. Talking to a friend, partner or family member can reduce the sense of isolation anxiety creates. If you can't turn to a loved one, organisations such as Anxiety UK can also provide information and structured support. You can also seek support from a relevant healthcare professional such as your GP if symptoms persist or get worse. For those seeking support, pharmacists can advise on over-the-counter options."

Nutrition brand secures £14m in funding to accelerate growth

A UK-based start-up with a personalised nutrition brand has secured £14m to accelerate global expansion and AI innovation.

Rem3dy Health, a health tech scale-up and parent company of personalised nutrition brand, Nourished, has announced the completion of a £14m fundraise, valuing the company at £84m. The funding will support Rem3dy Health's rapid growth, which includes expansion into international markets such as the United States, MENA region, and India, as well as continued investment in automation, advanced manufacturing, and AI-driven personalised nutrition. Rem3dy will also expand its product offering into personalised health solutions for pets.

Rem3dy Health has also benefited from support from the UK Department for Business & Trade (DBT), including founder and CEO, Melissa Snover's, selection for the inaugural DBT Female Founders Initiative cohort, a national programme to support some of the UK's most promising female technology founders.

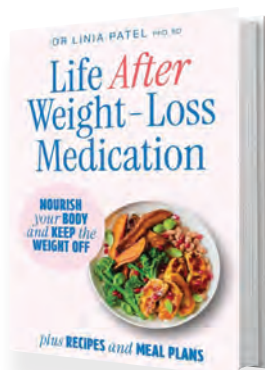
Allied Pharmacy shuts branch after Jhoots takeover

An Allied Pharmacy has been closed just a year after it took over the Jhoots chain.

The pharmacy in Minehead notified NHS Somerset of its intention to stop providing pharmacy services in the town and it has been confirmed the branch was to close on July 1, according to an online post from Minehead Medical Centre.

The move comes after Allied Pharmacies made multiple deals with Jhoots Pharmacy to acquire 129 pharmacy premises in 2025.

In February, local MP, Rachel Gilmour, met with Allied Pharmacy, where she said: "After my meeting today, I have confidence in Allied to play a key role in improving the state of local pharmacy services for constituents in Mid Devon and West Somerset. They're definitely an improvement on Jhoots, but now they need our help to keep each of their new premises open. Following these initial conversations, I look forward to working closely with the Allied team to ensure constituents can easily access life-improving and life-saving medications."



New book offers support, post-weight loss jobs

A leading dietitian and performance nutritionist is working to support people as they finish taking GLP-1 jabs.

Dr Linia Patel has penned *Life After Weight-Loss Medication*, designed to help people with the transition from taking jabs to stopping. The book offers long-term solutions for those wanting to keep the weight off but are overwhelmed by food noise.

Dr Patel has divided the book into six sections, which also includes recipes and meal plans.

Author of *Food for Menopause*, Dr Patel specialises in helping people optimise and their weight and their health through an evidence-based, empowering and holistic approach.

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New to market

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Hormone balance with MyOva

Magnesium Nightcap has been launched by MyOva to support female hormone balance at night.

The magnesium-rich hot chocolate is designed for women whose hormones are keeping them awake as research shows women are more likely than men to report poor sleep, yet the hormonal drivers behind that disruption – from luteal phase progesterone shifts to perimenopausal oestrogen decline – remain widely underdiscussed.

Magnesium Nightcap is designed to support the systems that underpin rest: the nervous system, stress response and hormonal rhythm. At its core is magnesium bisglycinate, a more bioavailable form of magnesium that the body absorbs more readily than standard magnesium oxide, gentler on digestion and more effective at cellular level.

It also contains vitamin B6, which, along with magnesium, contributes to normal nervous system function and the reduction

of tiredness and fatigue.

L-glycine has been studied for its role in sleep quality, with research suggesting it helps lower core body temperature before sleep and supports deeper, more restorative rest through the night, while Montmorency cherry is one of the few natural food sources of melatonin, supporting the body's sleep wake cycle, while its antioxidant content supports overnight recovery.

The formula is completed with standardised botanical extracts including lavender, chamomile and reishi mushroom, traditionally used to promote calm. Clean, vegan-friendly and filler free.



NATURAL FRESHNESS FROM LAVERA

New to the line-up at lavera is a natural deodorant.

The award-winning pioneer in certified organic skincare has developed an alcohol- and aluminium-free formula delivering more than 48 hours of high-performance freshness.

Natural & Strong Deodorant Stick marks a new era in natural body care, seamlessly combining an eco-conscious ethos with high-performance, long-lasting reliability.

Developed with lavera's signature commitment to skin-loving ingredients and sustainable practices, the Natural & Strong Deodorant Stick is made with a cutting-edge active composition of organic ginseng and natural minerals. Enriched with organic shea butter, it deeply nourishes, soothes, and calms stressed underarms.



LIQUID SUPPLEMENT LAUNCHES TO UK MARKET

An all-in-one micronutrient liquid supplement has launched to the UK market.

LaVita's goal is to make getting daily nutrition easy and effective, and so has developed a liquid supplement that combines 70 carefully selected natural ingredients, including fruits, vegetables, herbs and plant oils, with essential vitamins, minerals and trace elements. Just mix one tablespoon with a glass of water once a day.

Developed in 1999, LaVita was created by former German national ice hockey captain, Gerd Truntschka, who grew tired of taking handfuls of supplements every day. The natural formula is made from locally sourced fruits, vegetables, herbs and plant oils, including beetroot, carrot, broccoli, tomato, oranges, cherries, cranberries, blueberries, and pomegranate, along with milk thistle, thyme, wild garlic, ginger, rosemary, nettle, yarrow and lemon balm. They are carefully processed using traditional techniques including cold-pressing and fermentation to retain nutritional value. It is free of additives such as preservatives, and colourings, flavourings and is vegan, lactose-free and gluten-free.



UK supplement brand expands

Chrysalis Health has announced it is growing its NatraLABs range.

The contract manufacturer and supplier of nutritional supplements is expanding distribution of NatraLABs, a premium UK-produced selection of supplements.

The range has been formulated and manufactured by the development team at Chrysalis Health to meet growing demand. NatraLABs is UK GMP approved, BRCGS certified, FDA audited, Halal, Kosher and Soil Association certified.

Some of the UK branded products available include Cardio Duplex, Cognitive Complex, Collagen Matrix, Multi-Female Plus, Multi-Male Plus, and Mushroom Multiplex



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MAGNESIUM & MENOPAUSE: looking beyond hormones

In our latest CPD article, Registered Holistic Nutritionist, Meg Esser, discusses the critical role of magnesium during the menopause.

Menopause is often viewed primarily as a hormonal transition, but many of the symptoms

women experience extend well beyond changing oestrogen levels. Sleep disruption, mood changes, anxiety, fatigue, brain fog, muscle tension, and changes in bone health can all significantly affect quality of life during this stage of life.

What makes menopause particularly challenging is that these symptoms rarely occur in isolation. Poor sleep can increase stress. Elevated stress can further disrupt sleep. Both can contribute to fatigue, mood changes, and reduced resilience. As a result, many practitioners are taking a broader view of menopause support – one that looks not only at hormones, but also at nervous system regulation, sleep quality, stress management, and nutritional status.

Among the nutritional interventions most frequently recommended during menopause is magnesium. Its role in sleep, nervous system function, muscle health, and bone metabolism is well established. More recently, researchers have begun exploring whether combining magnesium with stress-supportive ingredients such as ashwagandha may provide a more comprehensive approach to supporting women during the menopausal transition.

Why magnesium matters

Magnesium is involved in hundreds





of enzymatic reactions throughout the body, including energy production, neurotransmitter regulation, muscle function, glucose metabolism, and bone mineralization. Research has also highlighted its role in nervous system regulation and sleep quality.¹

During menopause, declining oestrogen levels may influence magnesium homeostasis. Oestrogen appears to play a role in magnesium metabolism, leading some researchers to suggest that women may be particularly vulnerable to suboptimal magnesium status during the menopausal transition.² This hypothesis is supported by research showing significantly lower serum magnesium levels in peri- and post-menopausal women compared with premenopausal women, alongside changes in thyroid hormone activity.³ Given magnesium's involvement in nervous system function, energy metabolism, mood regulation, and sleep, reduced magnesium availability has been associated with symptoms such as fatigue, poor sleep, mood disturbances, and increased stress sensitivity.⁴

The sleep-menopause connection

Sleep disturbances are among the most common complaints reported during menopause.⁵ Difficulty falling asleep, frequent night waking, and non-restorative sleep can occur independently or alongside vasomotor symptoms, such as night sweats.

Magnesium has received considerable attention for its role in sleep regulation. Mechanistically, magnesium helps regulate neurotransmitters involved in relaxation and supports processes associated with melatonin production and circadian rhythm regulation.⁶ A 2021 systematic review and meta-analysis examining magnesium supplementation for insomnia found that magnesium reduced sleep onset latency and showed potential benefits for sleep quality, although the authors noted that larger, higher-quality studies are still needed.⁷

More recently, a 2024 review evaluating magnesium and psychological health concluded that supplemental magnesium may be beneficial for mild anxiety and insomnia, particularly in individuals with low magnesium status.⁸

Although menopause-specific data

remain limited, sleep is an important consideration because it often sits at the centre of many other menopausal complaints. Improving sleep quality may positively influence stress resilience, mood, energy, and overall wellbeing.

Magnesium, stress, and mood

Mood changes, anxiety, irritability, and heightened stress responsiveness are commonly reported during perimenopause and menopause.⁹

Magnesium plays an important role in regulating the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis and supporting healthy nervous system function. Emerging evidence suggests that magnesium deficiency may contribute to increased neural excitability and reduced resilience to stress.¹⁰

A growing body of research has linked magnesium supplementation with improvements in subjective measures of anxiety and psychological wellbeing. While results vary between studies, researchers consistently identify magnesium as an important nutritional factor influencing stress regulation.¹¹

From a clinical perspective, this relationship is particularly relevant because many menopause-related symptoms are interconnected. A woman who is sleeping poorly may experience increased stress. Increased stress may further impair sleep quality. Over time, this cycle can amplify symptoms and negatively affect quality of life.

Does the form matter?

When discussing magnesium supplementation, the form of magnesium is an important consideration.

Magnesium oxide remains one of the most commonly used forms due to its high elemental magnesium content, but it is relatively poorly absorbed.¹² In contrast, more soluble organic forms such as magnesium bisglycinate are often selected for their absorption characteristics and digestive tolerability.¹³

One concept that is often overlooked is that magnesium supplements are not simply magnesium – they are magnesium bound to another molecule. In the case of magnesium bisglycinate, magnesium is attached to the amino acid, glycine. Glycine itself has been studied for



its calming and sleep-supportive properties, making this form particularly interesting when supporting relaxation and sleep quality.¹⁴

While direct menopause-specific comparisons between magnesium forms are limited, magnesium bisglycinate is widely regarded as one of the gentlest and most bioavailable options available.¹⁵

Looking beyond magnesium

While magnesium can support several aspects of menopausal health, it may not fully address the impact that chronic stress can have on sleep quality, mood, and overall wellbeing. Since stress can both contribute to and amplify many menopausal symptoms, researchers are increasingly exploring strategies that support stress resilience alongside nutritional status.¹⁶

One ingredient receiving significant attention is ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*), one of the most extensively studied adaptogenic herbs. Traditionally used in Ayurvedic medicine, modern research has explored its effects on stress, anxiety, sleep quality, and overall wellbeing. A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial published in 2021 evaluated ashwagandha root extract in perimenopausal women and reported significant improvements in climacteric symptoms compared with placebo. Researchers concluded that ashwagandha may provide safe and effective support for women experiencing mild to moderate menopausal symptoms.¹⁷



“While hormones play an important role, sleep quality, stress resilience, nutritional status, and nervous system regulation can all influence how women experience this transition.”

More recently, a placebo-controlled study published in 2025 reported significant reductions in Menopause Rating Scale scores following supplementation with ashwagandha root extract, with improvements observed across psychological, somatic, and urogenital symptom domains.¹⁸

Additional clinical studies conducted outside menopause populations have also

demonstrated ashwagandha’s ability to reduce perceived stress and cortisol levels while supporting sleep quality.¹⁹ These findings are particularly relevant because stress and poor sleep are often key factors influencing quality of life during menopause.²⁰

A MORE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Menopause is complex, and the symptoms women experience are rarely driven by a single factor. While hormones play an important role, sleep quality, stress resilience, nutritional status, and nervous system regulation can all influence how women experience this transition.²¹

Magnesium supports nervous system function, sleep, muscle health, and bone metabolism. Ashwagandha may help support stress resilience, mood, and sleep quality. Together, they target several of the interconnected pathways that commonly influence menopausal wellbeing.

While further research is needed to determine optimal long-term strategies, the emerging evidence suggests there may be value in combining nutritional support with stress-management support rather than viewing either approach in isolation.

For pharmacists and healthcare practitioners, this reflects a broader shift in menopause care – one that recognises the interaction between hormones, sleep, stress, and nutrition, and the importance of supporting the whole person rather than a single symptom.



Meg Esser is a Registered Holistic Nutritionist, Co-owner, and VP of Sales and Marketing at ITL Health, a family-owned supplement company best known for MAG365 and PrizMAG.

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ON THE SHELF

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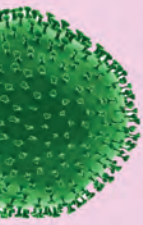


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The autumn hits and every year, people fall ill with the various cold bugs that do the rounds. And despite this being an annual occurrence, it can often be the case that Brits fare worse with the bugs because their immune system is under par.

There are various reasons for this, and while some are harder to remedy, there are factors that are modifiable. Ideally, a focus on immune health begins ahead of cold season, so people have time to strengthen their defences.

Let's begin with why the colder months are a common time to fall ill, with Kim Plaza, Senior Nutrition and Education Advisor at Bio-Kult, advising: "Autumn and winter can place pressure on immune health, partly because people tend to spend more time indoors, where respiratory viruses can spread more easily, especially in poorly ventilated spaces. Shorter days and reduced sunlight may also affect vitamin D status. Sunlight is often not strong enough during autumn and winter for the skin to make sufficient vitamin D, which is why current guidance recommends that patients consider supplementing during these months.¹

"Diet is another important factor. During the winter, some people may eat fewer fresh, colourful plant foods and rely more heavily on energy-dense comfort foods. A varied diet that includes fibre-rich plant foods can help support the gut microbiome, which is increasingly recognised as playing an important role in immune regulation.³"

Lindsay Powers, Nutritional Therapist and Head of Nutrition at Good Health Naturally, also advised: "In winter, most of us spend more time indoors, often in closer contact with others and in environments with central heating and poor air circulation. This creates ideal conditions for viruses to spread. Cold air tends to be dry, and indoor heating reduces humidity even further. This can dry out the nasal passages and throat. These mucous membranes form a vital first line of defence in the immune system, helping to trap and expel microbes. When they become dry, they're less effective, making it easier for infections to take hold."

Understand your immune system

It's important to understand what the immune system is and the role it plays in a wide range of health matters.

Slawek Gromadzki, from nutritional support/research and development at HealthAid, explained: "Think of your immune system as your body's personal army and repair team rolled into one. Every day, we come into contact with thousands of viruses, bacteria, fungi and other potentially harmful microbes, yet most of the time we never become ill because our immune system is constantly working behind the scenes to protect us. Its role extends far beyond fighting colds and 'flu. The immune system helps repair damaged tissues, removes worn-out and abnormal cells, supports wound healing and plays an important role in protecting against disease. One of its most important jobs is identifying and destroying potentially cancerous cells before they have the opportunity to develop further."

Nicola Sainty, Nutritional Therapist and Education Manager at Revive Active, continued: "The immune system is a complex network of cells, tissues and signalling molecules that work together to defend the body against pathogens such as bacteria, viruses and fungi. It includes physical barriers

(like the skin and mucous membranes), the innate immune response (our immediate defence), and the adaptive immune system, which develops targeted responses and immunological memory. Beyond infection control, the immune system plays a broader, yet central role in maintaining overall health. It supports tissue repair, helps regulate inflammation, and interacts closely with other systems, including the gut microbiome and nervous system. A well-functioning immune system is therefore fundamental not only for fighting illness but also for long-term resilience and recovery."

And Powers added: "Innate immunity is the defence system we are born with. It is the first line of defence against microbes entering the body and eliminates them quickly if they do. It includes physical barriers such as the skin and mucous membranes in the throat and gut. If pathogens manage to breach these barriers, a second line of defence is activated, involving antimicrobial substances, inflammation, fever, and white blood cells, such as natural killer cells and phagocytes. If a pathogen manages to evade these innate defences, the adaptive immune system takes over. The adaptive response develops over time. Each time a microbe enters the body, it triggers an immune response. Lymphocytes recognise the antigen and produce antibodies that bind to it, flagging it for destruction by other immune cells, such as phagocytes. The body builds a 'library' of antibodies known as immunological memory, enabling it to recognise and respond more rapidly when exposed to the same pathogen."

And what signs might a person exhibit if they have low immunity?

Sainty advised: "Clinically, low immune resilience often presents as increased susceptibility to infections, such as frequent colds, slow recovery, or recurrent respiratory or urinary tract infections. Other indicators include persistent fatigue, poor wound healing, and low-grade inflammation. These signs provide useful prompts for pharmacists to explore lifestyle or nutritional support."

Powers added: "Signs suggesting the immune system is not operating optimally can include frequent colds and infections, slow wound healing, gut issues such as diarrhoea, respiratory issues such as coughs, and irritability and stress."

It's also important to note longer-term issues can be linked to low immunity.

Gromadzki advised: "Immunity is not simply about being strong or weak. The immune system also needs to be properly balanced and regulated. Increasingly, researchers



IMMUNE HEALTH

believe that chronic inflammation, poor gut health and immune dysregulation may contribute to the development of a number of long-term health problems. Immune dysfunction has been linked to an increased risk of autoimmune conditions, where the immune system mistakenly attacks the body's own tissues. A healthy immune system also plays an important role in identifying and removing abnormal cells, which is one reason why maintaining good immune health is considered important for long-term protection against various types of cancer."

Sainty added: "Persistent immune dysfunction can increase vulnerability not only to infections but also to more serious long-term health challenges. Individuals may be at greater risk of chronic inflammation, which is now recognised as a contributing factor in conditions such as cardiovascular disease and metabolic disorders. Prolonged immune imbalance can impact the body's ability to regulate abnormal cell growth and manage latent infections. While low immunity is rarely the sole cause of disease, it is an important modifiable factor that can influence overall health outcomes and recovery capacity over time."

The role of lifestyle

A sedentary lifestyle, coupled with a poor diet, can be one of the biggest factors in reducing immunity.

Powers explained: "If the body doesn't receive the daily nutrients it needs, the immune response will be compromised and more vulnerable to illness and infection. Consuming too many processed foods, sugary snacks, and refined carbohydrates not only increases the risk of nutrient deficiencies but may disrupt gut bacteria and trigger chronic inflammation. This can activate the innate immune system while impairing the adaptive response, weakening the body's ability to fight off pathogens. Smoking, excessive alcohol intake and chronic stress can further deplete vital immune-supporting nutrients such as vitamin C and zinc. Without these key nutrients, the body may struggle to mount a strong immune defence.

"Sleep is a critical time for the body to carry out immune maintenance. It is when the body replenishes energy stores, repairs tissues and produces essential immune proteins such as cytokines. These cytokines are necessary

for regulating immune responses, especially during times of infection, inflammation or stress. If sleep is lacking, cytokine production drops, weakening the body's natural defences. Chronic stress can weaken the immune system. When under ongoing stress, the body releases hormones such as cortisol and noradrenaline in preparation for 'fight or flight.' This can deplete vitamin C and other critical immune-supporting nutrients. Over time, this response may even suppress white blood cell production, increasing vulnerability to infections. Obesity has a significant negative impact on immune health. Excess fat tissue promotes chronic low-grade inflammation and interferes with immune cell function. It alters cytokine production and can reduce the effectiveness of key immune cells like macrophages and natural killer cells."

Gromadzki added: "Modern lifestyles place enormous pressure on the immune system. Chronic stress, poor sleep, excessive sugar consumption, insufficient exposures to sun, lack of exercise, smoking, excessive alcohol intake, nutrient deficiencies (especially deficiency of antioxidants, vitamin D, C, B12, zinc, and selenium) and certain medications can all weaken our natural defences. Sugar deserves special mention because diets high in refined sugar may promote inflammation, negatively affect gut health and significantly impair immune function over time."

So, what are the best recommendations in terms of the shifts customers should make?

Powers recommended: "A nourishing diet rich in vegetables, fruits, healthy fats,

nuts, seeds and pulses with good-quality meat and fish helps ensure a wide range of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, which are all needed to support immunity. Fibre and fermented foods such as kefir, kombucha, and sauerkraut will help support the microbiome, which is closely linked to immune function. Vitamin C-rich foods such as oranges, blackcurrants, peppers, and broccoli can also help strengthen immunity, particularly in the colder months. Since vitamin C cannot be stored in the body, it must be consumed daily. A deficiency can increase susceptibility to infections. Research suggests flavonoids can help reduce the risk of respiratory infections. Good sources include blackberries, apples, bananas, pears, tomatoes, aubergines, onions, celery, artichokes, walnuts, pecans, and beans.

"Turmeric contains curcumin, known for its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. It may help reduce inflammation and inhibit viral replication. Garlic, used for centuries to support immunity, contains allicin and other compounds shown to combat bacteria, viruses and fungi, potentially reducing the severity and duration of colds and flu. Managing stress through practices such as mindfulness, meditation, yoga, Tai Chi, and Pilates can help build resilience."

Sainty went on: "A balanced diet rich in whole foods, particularly vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts, seeds and quality proteins provide essential nutrients and antioxidants that support immune function. Maintaining regular physical activity and prioritising restorative sleep are equally critical. From a pharmacy perspective, supporting stress management and gut health can also be key. The gut microbiome plays a central role in immune regulation, so encouraging daily inclusion of fibre-rich foods is a sensible recommendation."



"While low immunity is rarely the sole cause of disease, it is an important modifiable factor that can influence overall health outcomes and recovery capacity over time."

ON THE SHELF



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IMMUNE HEALTH

Plaza added: "The best place to start is with the foundations of health; a varied, colourful diet, regular movement, good-quality sleep, stress management and daily exposure to natural light where possible. A colourful, plant-rich diet can help provide key micronutrients and compounds. Seasonal options such as squash, kale, beetroot, leeks, apples and pears provide fibre, vitamins, minerals and polyphenols."

Gromadzki went on: "Adequate protein is important because immune cells are constantly being produced and renewed. Reducing excessive sugar intake can also make a significant difference. Many experts consider sugar one of the biggest dietary obstacles to good immune health because of its effects on inflammation and gut balance."

It's also critical to be aware of nutrient deficiencies that can lower immune function.

Gromadzki advised: "Nutrient deficiencies are surprisingly common and can have a significant impact on immune function. Vitamin D deficiency is widespread in the UK, particularly during autumn and winter. Low levels of vitamin C, zinc, selenium, vitamin A, B12 and iron may also affect the body's ability to mount an effective immune response. People following restrictive diets, older adults, smokers, those under prolonged stress and individuals with digestive disorders may be particularly vulnerable to deficiencies that can compromise immune health."

Sainty added: "Key nutrients involved in immune support include vitamin D, vitamin C, zinc, iron, selenium and vitamins A, B6 and B12. Deficiency symptoms can be subtle and non-specific, such as fatigue, poor concentration, or frequent infections. Certain groups, including older adults, those with restricted diets, or individuals with digestive issues may be at higher risk. This underscores the value of targeted nutritional support based on individual need."

The gut connection

There is a growing body of evidence to confirm the critical link between the gut and immune system.

Powers explained: "Around 70 per cent of immune tissue resides in the digestive system, in what's known as gut-associated lymphoid tissue. The gastrointestinal tract is technically 'outside' the body and home to potentially harmful microorganisms. To manage this, the gut's mucosal lining is rich in immune cells, including lymphocytes and macrophages. Research shows gut microbiota

plays a key role in the development and regulation of innate and adaptive immune responses."

Gromadzki continued: "Around 70 per cent of the immune system is associated with the gut, which is why a healthy diet rich in fibre, plant and fermented foods can be so beneficial."

Since much of the immune system is associated with the gut, supporting a healthy balance of beneficial bacteria may help strengthen

overall immune function and resilience."

Plaza added: "Traditionally fermented foods such as kefir, kimchi, sauerkraut and live yoghurt can form part of a gut-supporting diet. Over 70 per cent of immune cells are found in the gut,⁵ so looking after digestive health through diet may be one useful way to support immune resilience. Live bacteria supplements can be useful, as the gut microbiome plays an important role in immune regulation.⁶ A multi-strain live bacteria supplement may be a convenient option for those looking to support both gut health and immune function through winter."

Immune supportive supplements

There are many supplements that can strengthen immunity, while others can ease symptoms of a virus.

"Vitamin D is one of the most relevant winter supplements," Plaza advised. "UK guidance recommends adults and children over four consider taking 10mcg daily during autumn and winter.¹ People at higher risk of deficiency may need year-round supplementation, including those with limited sun exposure, darker skin, people who cover most of their skin outdoors, older adults and those living in care homes. In general, nutrients such as zinc, magnesium, vitamins A, C and D and polyphenols (such as elderberry) are commonly used to support normal immune function.⁷⁻⁹"

Gromadzki added: "Vitamin C helps support immune cells while also protecting them from oxidative stress. Zinc is another key nutrient that is often overlooked. It is involved in the normal development and function of many immune cells, and even mild deficiencies may affect immune resilience."

And Sainty suggested: "Vitamin C remains a staple for its antioxidant properties and role in immune defence, while less well known, yet scientifically researched ingredients such as chicory root, beta glucans and L-glutamine may be beneficial to bolster and amplify more well-known traditional vitamins and minerals. For pharmacy teams, the emphasis should be on tailored recommendations, appropriate dosing, and educating customers that supplements work best alongside strong lifestyle foundations."

If people do fall ill, Gromadzki advised: "Vitamin D3 (2000-4000 IU daily after breakfast) with 150mg of magnesium (required for the activation of D3) remain

most important, particularly for individuals with low levels. Vitamin B12 and zinc (especially when combined with quercetin) are also very important for normal immune function and may help support recovery during periods of illness. Some plant extracts and foods, such as black seed oil, garlic, or propolis, can be very beneficial due to their known antimicrobial and immune-stimulating properties."

Powers added: "Supplementing with zinc and selenium can help support immunity. Due to modern soil depletion, levels of these minerals in our food may be lower than in the past, making supplementation a practical option for many. Olive leaf extract is increasingly recognised for its immune-supportive properties. It contains a powerful compound called oleuropein, which has been shown to have antiviral, antibacterial and anti-inflammatory effects. Some studies suggest it may shorten the duration and severity of cold or 'flu-like symptoms.'"

Sainty continued: "During acute illness, certain nutrients such as vitamin C may help support the immune response and reduce symptom severity or duration when taken regularly. Zinc, particularly when used early, has also been associated with reduced symptom length. Additional support may include vitamin D if levels are low, while less well-known, ingredients such as chicory root (providing fibre), beta glucans – specifically the 1,3–1,6 linked, branched-chain structures typically derived from yeast, which are distinct from the linear beta glucans – associated with cholesterol management, alongside amino acids such as L-glutamine and L-lysine, may also be considered to complement and amplify more traditional vitamins and minerals."



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☆ BEST HERBAL

Organic Cinnamon Extract

Known as 'true cinnamon' Viridian Organic Cinnamon Extract helps maintain normal blood lipid levels and healthy blood sugar levels. Ceylon cinnamon has gained attraction for its potential health benefits, including the maintenance of healthy blood sugar levels. Cinnamon helps maintain normal blood lipid levels and stomach comfort. Viridian Organic Cinnamon is certified Organic by the Soil Association. Contains 100% actives formulated by expert nutritionists with no artificial fillers and no nasties. Sourced according to Viridian's strict ethical criteria including no animal testing, GMO or palm oil. www.viridian-nutrition.com



☆ BEST NEW

Camo - Your key to the Great outdoors.

Camo is your key to the great outdoors and is the world's strongest natural insect repellent, offering up to 11 hours of protection for you and your family. Powered by Citriodiol, our insect repellents, derived from oil of lemon eucalyptus leaves, are gentle on the skin and offer long-lasting protection against mosquitos, midges, ticks, and other biting insects. A non-toxic alternative to DEET, our sprays, roll ons and wearables are more effective and better for the environment, so you can stay safe whilst enjoying the outdoors. www.camoprotect.com



☆ BEST HERBAL

Arnica Massage Balm - Ease Aching Muscles Naturally

A traditional herbal medicinal product used for the symptomatic relief of muscular pain, backache, minor sports injuries, rheumatic pain, stiffness, bruising, cramp and sprains. This iconic product, now in eye-catching new packaging for greater standout on shelf, features the natural anti-inflammatory Arnica montana – an alpine plant prized for its ability to ease muscle and joint pain. The aromatic, vegan-friendly formulation is naturally fragranced with soothing lavender and invigorating rosemary. Available in three sizes: a handy 50ml travel size, convenient 100ml for more regular use, and a larger 200ml for everyday treatment. The perfect recovery partner. www.weleda.co.uk



☆ BEST NEW

GOPO® Joint Health

GOPO® Joint Health is a unique patented food supplement made from specially cultivated rose-hip. Long standing Scandinavian research projects, together with published scientific studies have established that rose-hip (Rosa canina) with a high level of GOPO® may play a valuable role in the care of joints and joint tissues. A special patented manufacturing process is used to ensure that this product contains a high level of GOPO® - making it a supplement with completely unique qualities. GOPO® Joint Health is also rich in Vitamin C which is essential for normal collagen formation, needed by the body for healthy bones and cartilage. Food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a balanced diet and healthy lifestyle. gopo.co.uk



☆ BEST HERBAL

Arnica For Family First Aid

Weleda's Arnica 30C Tablets has been the company's top selling homeopathic remedy for over 20 years and is still enjoying 7% growth year on year (source: Weleda total sell in data 2025). Unsurprisingly a favourite in pharmacy, this remedy is suitable for both adults and children, and a handy addition to the family first aid kit. Expertly formulated with the herb Arnica Montana grown biodynamically, the tincture is potentised by hand, and the medicine then carefully prepared to licensed pharmaceutical standards at Weleda's Derbyshire headquarters. From a B Corp certified business. www.weleda.co.uk



☆ BEST NEW

Metabolic Weight Support

Curb the cravings with Metabolic Weight Support! Metabolic Weight Support is one of the first supplements in the UK formulated with Metaboloid, a blend of natural Hibiscus sabdariffa and Lemon verbena extracts. This blend has 20 years of research and several trials to support its use. We have combined it with chromium and vitamin C, which contribute to the maintenance of normal blood glucose ensuring you feel energized and ready to tackle your fitness goal. Metabolic Weight Support is designed to complement a healthy diet and regular exercise, empowering you on your weight management journey. www.lambertshealthcare.co.uk



★ BEST NEW

Potent NAD+ Cellular Protect

Support cellular health from within with Viridian NAD+ Cellular Protect. This advanced formula combines NAD+, and the NAD pre-cursor NR and other key nutrients to fuel cellular energy, fight oxidative stress and reduce daily fatigue. NR is a researched alternative to NMN. The inclusion of niacin (vitamin B3) contributes to normal energy yielding metabolism and the reduction of tiredness and fatigue. Vitamin E also contributes to the protection of cells from oxidative stress, whilst CoQ10 provides additional support for everyday wellbeing. This optimal formulation provides comprehensive cellular support by helping to maintain the body's natural processes. Contains active ingredients, avoids additives. www.viridian-nutrition.com



★ BEST SUPPLEMENT

pH Hero®

pH Hero® is the advanced formula for the vaginal microbiome and urinary tract health, with eleven targeted botanicals and 20 billion live cultures to combat and protect against UTIs, BV, discomfort, and irritation, restoring optimal pH balance. With Sea Buckthorn, Parsley, Cranberry, Nettle, Vitamin B6, prebiotics, and five strains of active bacteria, including Lactobacillus Crispatus and Reuteri. rrp £28.99. Available from CLF, Dundee, and The Natural Dispensary. www.drvegan.com



★ BEST SUPPLEMENT

elete™ – the electrolyte concentrate. Pure hydration, anytime, anywhere.

elete™ is a concentrated electrolyte add-in made from naturally sourced ionic minerals from the Great Salt Lake, Utah. Unlike many electrolyte drinks, elete™ contains no sugar, sweeteners, artificial flavours or colours – just pure electrolytes to support hydration. Simply add it to water, juice or your favourite drink. The compact 25ml Pocket Bottle is ideal for everyday hydration, whether you're at home, at work, travelling or on the go. Each reusable bottle makes 10 litres of electrolyte-fuelled hydration, making it a simple, convenient and cost-effective way to stay hydrated wherever life takes you. www.elewater.co.uk



★ BEST SUPPLEMENT

Take the Misery Out of Menopause

One of the most challenging stages of a woman's life is the menopause, levels of female hormones, oestrogen and progesterone begin to fall during this time. This can cause unpleasant symptoms such as hot flushes, night sweats, irritability, mood swings and depression. Menovital® is one of the most comprehensive Menopause products on the market. It consists of 16 essential ingredients including: Soy Isoflavones, Flaxseed, Siberian Ginseng extract and Starflower to help the body maintain overall health and wellbeing during the midlife change. Menovital® from HealthAid® retails at £15.99 for 60 tablets. Contact HealthAid® Ltd on 020 8426 3400 for purchase and stockist information or visit www.healthaid.co.uk.



★ BEST SUPPLEMENT

Bio.Me Prebio GOS

Bio.Me Prebio GOS is an easy-to-use "fibre" that feeds. One of the first prebiotics any of us consume, GOS is a fibre-like compound found in breast and formula milk. GOS's long chains of sugars ferment in the gut and support gut regularity. Made from dairy lactose, our GOS is ideal for many demographics, notably infants and breastfeeding mothers. It's also popular with biohackers unlocking the restorative powers of the body. GOS provides fast fuel to bifidobacterium and other SCFA-producing bacteria, supporting our gut barrier and providing a whole host of researched health benefits for the body and mind. www.invivohealthcare.com



★ BEST SUPPLEMENT

Gentle Magnesium Bisglycinate

Lamberts Gentle Magnesium provides 150mg elemental magnesium in the well absorbed and well tolerated bisglycinate form. This form is popular as an alternative for those with a sensitive digestion as it is gentle on the stomach. Many people recommend it as part of a relaxing nighttime regime, as magnesium contributes to normal muscle and psychological function. It can also contribute to a reduction in tiredness and fatigue, making it ideal for those who struggle with their energy levels. Most people in the UK fail to consume a sufficient level of this mineral from their diets so supplementation can be useful. www.lambertshealthcare.co.uk



★ BEST SUPPLEMENT

Olivit Presents Osavi Magtein - Magnesium L-threonate

Part of the Osavi Vital range, this supplement comes in the form of a hard capsule containing clinically tested, high-quality magnesium L-threonate, Magtein®. Magnesium L-threonate is the only magnesium form that crosses the blood-brain barrier and helps maintain healthy magnesium levels in the brain, contributing to the normal function of the nervous system. Suitable for vegans. Available to purchase at Olivit www.olivit.co.uk



★ BEST SUPPLEMENT

ProVen Biotics For Women

The genito-urinary tract comprises both the urinary tract and the vaginal tract and both contain a microbiome (bacteria) in the same way as the gastrointestinal tract. Lactobacillus is the primary bacteria species found in the vagina of healthy women and the growth of too many other strains can lead to an imbalance in the natural bacteria of the vagina. Multi-strain live bacteria, including three Lactobacillus strains ProVen For Women contains three Lactobacillus strains – two Lactobacillus acidophilus strains and Lactobacillus gasseri, which is a key part of the vaginal flora. Each one-a-day capsule contains 17.5 billion live bacteria, combining the Lab4 consortium of bacteria with Lactobacillus gasseri. Each capsule also contains cranberry extract and vitamin B6, which contributes to the regulation of hormonal activity. www.provenbiotics.uk



★ BEST SUPPLEMENT

B Complex Plus

B-Complex Plus offers a comprehensive blend of B vitamins packed into one easy-to-take supplement. Includes active forms of B vitamins, including pyridoxal-5-phosphate, riboflavin-5-phosphate and folate as 5-methyltetrahydrofolate (5-MTHF), the universally metabolized and biologically active form of folate. Vitamins B1, B3, and B6 contribute to normal functioning of the nervous system. Folate, vitamin B5 and B12 contribute to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue. www.pure-encapsulations.co.uk



★ BEST SUPPLEMENT

Qsilica Skin, Hair & Nails One-A-Day Multi-Nutrient Tablets

Qsilica Skin, Hair & Nails One-A-Day Multi-Nutrient Tablets contain colloidal silica, biotin, zinc and selenium in a convenient, once daily supplement. Silica supports bone integrity, assists connective tissue production and together with biotin and zinc, supports the health of your skin, hair & nails. The handy once daily supplement is a simple and comprehensive way to support hair structure, nails strength and skin health. Whether its post partum hair loss, brittle nails or poor skin health, customers are delighted that results can usually be seen after just a few weeks! www.qsilica.co.uk



★ BEST SUPPLEMENT

Everyday Magnesium, Thoughtfully Formulated

Solaray Magnesium Glycinate offers a gentle, fully chelated form of magnesium in a convenient daily formula, created for those seeking trusted support as part of everyday wellbeing. Made by reacting magnesium with the free-form amino acid glycine, it is designed with absorption and digestive comfort in mind. Each serving delivers 350mg elemental magnesium and includes 5mg BioPerine® black pepper extract to help make magnesium more available to the body. At Solaray, we carefully source clean, traceable materials, scouring the globe for the best nature has to offer, helping you Live Brighter. Trusted brand since 1973 through purposeful everyday wellness routines. www.solarayeuropa.com



★ BEST SUPPLEMENT

Pure Electrolyte Fix Liquid

Refuel your liquids with Electrolyte Fix by replenishing the body's natural minerals. Sourced from the Great Salt Lake in Utah, USA, Viridian Electrolyte Fix is a pure source of 4 natural minerals and electrolytes. The concentrated drops contain four essential electrolytes: magnesium, which contributes to electrolyte balance and normal energy levels, as well as a reduction in tiredness and fatigue; potassium, which contributes to normal muscle function; and sodium and chloride. Just ½ a teaspoon turns any cold beverage or water into an electrolyte-fuelled drink. A clean formulation with active ingredients and no added sweeteners, preservatives and avoiding anything artificial. www.viridian-nutrition.com



☆ BEST MOTHER & BABY CARE

Helios ABC for Babies

Helios ABC contains three homeopathic remedies, Aconite, Belladonna and Chamomilla. This combination has a long and proven history of traditional use for childhood teething, fevers, sore throats and earache. Homeopathy has a large part to play in supporting health naturally, offering gentle, safe and effective alternatives for common complaints for all the family, including babies and young children. Helios ABC comes in lactose free, organic sucrose pill form in our easy-to-use, single dose dispenser.

Website: www.helios.co.uk

Email: retail@helios.co.uk



☆ BEST PERSONAL AND BODYCARE

BioKap Rapid Hairdye

Transform your hair care routine with BioKap Rapid—the first natural at-home hair dye that delivers flawless grey coverage in just 10 minutes. This breakthrough, vegan formula is packed with over 90% natural ingredients, including Organic Argan Oil for deep nourishment and an exclusive Tricorepair complex that protects the scalp and prevents colour fade. Available in a beautiful range of 12 long-lasting, natural shades, BioKap is completely free from Ammonia, PPD, Resorcinol, and fragrance. Dermatologically and nickel-tested, it is the ultimate gentle choice for even the most sensitive scalps. www.biokap.co.uk



☆ BEST MOTHER & BABY CARE

Olbas for Children is a Gentle Decongestant to Help Little Ones Breathe More Easily

For those little blocked noses that find traditional Olbas Oil just a bit too powerful, there's Olbas for Children, a gentle decongestant formulation to relieve congestion in even the smallest noses of the family. The natural formula is a mixture of pure plant oils which releases vapours to help nasal congestion and to restore easy breathing. Useful for colds and flu, catarrh, blocked sinuses and hay fever in children and infants aged 3 months and over.

www.olbas.co.uk



☆ BEST PERSONAL AND BODYCARE

Grab and Go Lather!

Keep your soap dry and within reach with this natural bar, complete with a sturdy, unbleached cotton rope, perfect for hanging up between uses. Our nourishing natural Aloe Vera Soap Bar is fragrance-free and uses only the gentlest plant-based ingredients and no colourants. Aloe vera has long been praised for its use in skin care, as the medicinal plant has been traditionally used to improve skin integrity. It is anti-inflammatory, skin-protecting, anti-bacterial, anti-viral, antiseptic, and has wound healing properties, too. Handmade in the UK, Friendly Soap soap bars are plastic-free, palm oil-free and cruelty-free. www.friendlysoap.co.uk



☆ BEST MOTHER & BABY CARE

Viridikid Baby Vitamin Drops for optimal support

Viridikid Baby Vitamin Drops are a gentle, easy way to give a daily supplement to support little ones from 6 months and older. The formulation contains a carefully balanced blend of 3 essential vitamins: A, C, and D. Each dose delivers targeted benefits to support a baby's growing needs: vitamin A contributes to the normal function of the immune system, vitamin C increases iron absorption, vitamin D contributes to normal blood calcium levels, the maintenance of normal bones and teeth and normal immunity. Free of artificial preservatives, colours, sugars and flavours. With a pleasant natural orange taste and delivered in a simple dropper format. www.viridian-nutrition.com



☆ BEST PERSONAL AND BODYCARE

Natracare Tampons – The Number One Choice

Natracare has been the number one choice for plastic-free panty liners, pads and organic tampons for over thirty years. Their tampons are free from plastic, chlorine, synthetic fragrances and other harmful chemicals, and use 100% organic cotton that's certified to the Global Organic Textiles Standards. With easy-glide biodegradable cardboard applicators and recyclable packaging, Natracare tampons are ethical and sustainable, right down to the core. www.natracare.co.uk



★ BEST PERSONAL AND BODYCARE

Organyc: Pure organic protection

Beat the summer heat without compromising on comfort. Organyc 2-in-1 Panty Liners are the ultimate warm-weather essential, designed specifically for those who prioritise skin health and breathability. While standard liners often rely on plastic covers that trap heat and moisture, Organyc uses 100% certified organic cotton for both the top sheet and the core. This natural fibre allows your skin to breathe, significantly reducing the risk of summer irritation and sweat-induced discomfort. They are ultra-thin, pH-balanced, and free from synthetic perfumes, ensuring you stay fresh and confident from the beach to the promenade. For more information contact Pravera Ltd
Email: trade@pravera.co.uk Tel: 01557870203



★ BEST PERSONAL AND BODYCARE

A deodorant without compromise

Salt of the Earth Oud & Bergamot Refillable Roll-On combines sophisticated fragrance with certified natural performance. Blending rich, woody oud with fresh bergamot, it delivers long lasting odour protection in a distinctive unisex scent. Made in the UK and certified COSMOS Natural, Vegan Society approved, Leaping Bunny approved and B Corp Certified, it reflects the brand's commitment to trusted natural ingredients and responsible manufacturing. The refillable design helps reduce plastic waste by allowing customers to reuse the roll-on bottle, making everyday personal care a more responsible choice without compromising on quality or effectiveness. **www.saltoftheearthnatural.com**



★ BEST PERSONAL AND BODYCARE

Restore & Shine: Organic Hair Restore Serum

Elevate your hair care routine with Viridian Organic Hair Restore Serum. A powerful 5-in-1 topical treatment comprised of cold-pressed blend of plant seed oils. The science backed formula contains organic essential oils distilled from fresh herbs, including rosemary and lavender. A nourishing blend of argan, evening primrose and safflower oil contributes to hair lustre and shine. Suitable for all hair types, the serum helps to stimulate hair & scalp, moisturise & nourishes, enhances visible softness, improves brightness & shine, and reduces tangling. This lightweight, non-greasy formula is free from synthetic fragrances and artificial additives, non-animal tested. Part of the Tri-Hair System which in user trials increased the positive feel participants had about their hair by 100%. **www.viridian-nutrition.com**



PRODUCT AWARDS

2026

HOW TO VOTE

- ★ Visit naturalpharmacybusiness.com/awards
- ★ Join us at the **Pharmacy Show** and cast your vote in person
- ★ Complete the **form** below and return it to the address provided

★ BEST HERBAL

- ☐ Allicin Max Powder Capsules
- ☐ Kalms Day
- ☐ Lamberts Vein Tain
- ☐ Lingora Natural Oral Rinse
- ☐ NutraTea NutraMeno
- ☐ Olbas Anti Allergy Nasal Spray
- ☐ Viridian Organic Cinnamon Extract
- ☐ Weleda Arnica Massage Balm
- ☐ Weleda Arnica Tablets

★ BEST NEW

- ☐ Camo Insect Repellent
- ☐ GOPO Joint Health
- ☐ Lamberts Metabolic Weight Support
- ☐ Viridian NAD+ Cellular Protect

★ BEST SUPPLEMENT

- ☐ DRVEGAN pH Hero
- ☐ elete – the electrolyte
- ☐ Health Aid Menovital
- ☐ Invivo Bio.Me Prebio GOS
- ☐ Lambert Magnesium Bisglycinate
- ☐ Olivit Osavi Magtein
- ☐ ProVen Biotics For Women
- ☐ Pure Encapsulations B Complex Plus
- ☐ Qsilica Skin, Hair & Nails One-A-Day Multi-Nutrient Tablets
- ☐ Solaray Magnesium Glycinate
- ☐ Viridian Electrolyte Fix Liquid

★ BEST MOTHER AND BABY CARE

- ☐ Helios ABC
- ☐ Olbas For Children
- ☐ Viridian Viridikid Baby Vitamin Drops

★ BEST PERSONAL AND BODYCARE

- ☐ BioKap Rapid Hair Dye
- ☐ Friendly Soap Soap On A Rope
- ☐ Natracare Organic Cotton Tampons
- ☐ Organyc: Pure organic protection
- ☐ Salt of the Earth Oud & Bergamot Refillable Roll-On
- ☐ Viridian Restore & Shine: Organic Hair Restore Serum

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FREEPOST to NPB Product Awards 2026, FREEPOST ANG10222, BISHOPS STORTFORD, CM22 6ZY. Thank you for voting. The winners will be announced in the December/ January 2026/27 issue of *Natural Pharmacy Business*. Closing date is October 16, 2026.

Pharmacist Support Update



Supporting wellbeing at every stage of the pharmacy journey

Writing for *Natural Pharmacy Business*, Pharmacist Support details new initiatives, growing impact and what's ahead in 2026.

Behind every prescription, every patient consultation and every long shift worked, there is a pharmacy professional balancing the demands of a challenging and rapidly evolving profession.

As the profession's independent charity, Pharmacist Support champions the wellbeing of its pharmacy family, with a vision that no pharmacist, trainee or student will face challenging times alone. The charity provides free and confidential support to anyone whose name is, or has previously been, on the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) register, as well as pharmacy trainees and students across Great Britain.

A growing need

The need for support has never been greater. Research shows 87 per cent of pharmacists are at high risk of burnout, highlighting increasing pressures and the importance of accessible wellbeing support.

Responding to these challenges remains a key priority for Pharmacist Support. The charity is now delivering its new five-year strategy, to strengthen support services and reach more members than ever before. A number of initiatives have already been introduced to help individuals navigate workplace pressures and build resilience. Recognising challenges often begin long before registration, the charity has also been reviewing and strengthening its support for students and trainees. Importantly, this work has been shaped by the voices of the people they are designed to help. During the development of the student offering, a pharmacy student attended a board meeting and provided valuable insights that helped inform future plans and priorities.

Another welcome addition has been the launch of a financial wellbeing programme in partnership with Rebel Finance School. At a time when financial pressures affect many across the profession, the programme offers practical guidance and resources to help individuals gain confidence and improve their financial resilience.



New wellbeing resources

Wellbeing remains at the heart of everything Pharmacist Support does, and the charity continues to develop innovative ways to help people thrive.

Melissa Cochrane, Wellbeing Development Senior Manager at Pharmacist Support, explained: "As part of our continued commitment to proactive wellbeing support, later this year, we'll be launching our new Essential Eight wellbeing framework – eight core elements focused on helping individuals build healthier habits and lead more fulfilling lives. Backed by practical guidance and accessible resources, the Essential Eight is designed to help people make meaningful, lasting changes that positively support wellbeing and quality of life. We can't wait to share this with you and to hear about the difference it makes."

The new framework represents another step towards empowering pharmacy professionals with practical tools that support wellbeing throughout their careers.

Looking ahead

There is plenty more to look forward to for the remainder of the year. The popular ACTNow campaigns return, with Trainee ACTNow in August and Pharmacist ACTNow following in November. Each campaign will provide tailored wellbeing resources, practical advice and support designed to meet the needs of each group. These campaigns continue to play an important role in raising awareness of

wellbeing while equipping individuals with tools and strategies they can apply in their daily lives.

One of our fundraising initiatives, Walk for Wellbeing, returns in September. The campaign has become a highlight of the pharmacy calendar, bringing together individuals, teams and organisations from the sector to take on a walking challenge and help raise much-needed funds. With 35 per cent of pharmacists suffering from poor mental health and 70 per cent experiencing loneliness, every donation will help people who work and study in pharmacy

to access life-changing talking therapy through our counselling and peer support services.

Participants also play a vital role in raising funds that enable Pharmacist Support to continue delivering services and respond to growing demand. Following the success of previous events, the charity expanding opportunities for engagement and connection in 2026, helping even more members of the pharmacy family feel supported and included.

Championing wellbeing

As Pharmacist Support evolves, its long-term ambition is clear: every member of its pharmacy family knows where to turn when they need support.

Danielle Hunt, Chief Executive of Pharmacist Support, explained: "As we look towards 2030, we seek to continue to expand our reach so that no one in the pharmacy family feels unsupported when facing personal or professional challenges. Part of this is continuing to raise awareness of the wide range of wellbeing support available. We are also committed to strengthening partnerships across the sector, working more closely with individuals and organisations."

With new services, innovative wellbeing initiatives and a growing community of supporters, Pharmacist Support ensures the pharmacy family does not face challenges alone. For guidance, support, and to find out how you can get involved, visit www.pharmacistsupport.org/



Four decades of Helios

Natural Pharmacy Business catches up with Helios Homeopathy as the business celebrates 40 years of quality, care and commitment.

The last four decades has seen huge growth and evolution of the natural health market. We have seen new categories emerge, expanded product availability, and a more interested consumer.

Through all these changes, Helios Homeopathy has managed to stay true to its founding ethos of 40 years ago, based on traditional homeopathic principles, while also evolving to meet the needs of the modern consumer. And this approach has been the right one as this November marks an important milestone for Helios, with the company celebrating 40 years of serving practitioners, patients, the public and, increasingly, community pharmacy.

Roz Crompton, Trade and Operations Director at Helios, commented: "What began in 1986 as a small homeopathic

pharmacy founded on passion, knowledge and traditional principles has grown into one of the UK's leading homeopathic pharmacies and manufacturers, supplying customers across the UK and around the world.

"Throughout four decades of growth, Helios has remained true to the values on which it was founded: producing homeopathic medicines of the highest quality, prepared according to traditional methods, while offering the expertise, personal service and reliability that have earned the trust of generations of practitioners, pharmacists and consumers."

A pharmacist inspired by homeopathy

The story of Helios began with founder, John Morgan, a qualified pharmacist whose interest in medicinal plants and natural

medicines led him to discover homeopathy. Having specialised in pharmacognosy (the study of medicines derived from plants), John worked as a locum pharmacist for two established homeopathic pharmacies in London.

Roz explained: "It was there he first encountered homeopathy and became fascinated by its philosophy and its potential to support health in a gentle, yet effective way."

Keen to deepen his knowledge, John then enrolled at the London College of Homeopathy.

"During his studies, fellow students recognised both his pharmaceutical expertise and his understanding of medicinal substances and approached him wanting to learn about remedy preparation," Roz added. "Together, they held practical workshops,



Founder, John Morgan

making around 30 remedies from raw materials using traditional homeopathic methods."

As demand for these remedies grew from both fellow students and also practising homeopaths looking for a reliable source of carefully prepared remedies, the idea for Helios was borne.

Roz went on: "It soon became clear there was an opportunity to establish a new homeopathic pharmacy built around quality, authenticity and practitioner involvement."

And so, in November 1986, John and his wife, Maya, founded Helios Homeopathic Pharmacy with a small team of homeopaths and students, laying the foundations for what has become one of the world's most respected homeopathic pharmacies.

Building something new

When Helios opened, there were already four established homeopathic pharmacies in the UK, and Roz explained that the company has always held great respect for the important

"What began in 1986 as a small homeopathic pharmacy founded on passion, knowledge and traditional principles has grown into one of the UK's leading homeopathic pharmacies and manufacturers..."

contribution they have made to homeopathy. However, the mid-1980s saw growing public interest in complementary healthcare, creating room for another pharmacy with its own distinctive philosophy.

Roz advised: "From the outset, John wanted to create remedies directly from carefully sourced plant, mineral and other natural substances, using sustainable sources wherever possible. Just as importantly, the remedies would be prepared by homeopaths who understood the principles behind them, working alongside qualified pharmacists within a registered pharmacy. That philosophy continues to underpin the business today. Every remedy is prepared using the traditional processes

of trituration, dilution and succussion, supported by modern quality systems, meticulous record keeping and rigorous manufacturing standards."

From the early days as a homeopathic pharmacy, the natural next step was to create its own brand of products to expand the Helios reach.

Roz recalled: "Helios began with just six members of staff, around 30 to 40 remedies and approximately 30 customer orders each day. As interest in homeopathy continued to grow throughout the 1990s, so too did the business. A major milestone came in 1996 with the opening of our dedicated manufacturing facility. This enabled the company to produce licensed individual remedies and later develop a range of combination remedies, tissue salts, creams and remedy kits for over-the-counter sale through community pharmacies, health food stores and clinics."

The opening of the Covent Garden pharmacy in 2002 further strengthened Helios' connection with practitioners and the public, while providing a London base. Today, Helios employs 80 people, the majority of whom are qualified homeopaths and pharmacists. The company now maintains an extensive remedy bank of more than



3,800 remedies in a wide range of potencies and dispatches up to 800 orders a day throughout the UK and internationally. Yet despite this growth, Helios remains proudly family owned, retaining the personal service and close customer relationships that have defined the company since its earliest days.

"Many employees have been with Helios for more than 20 or even 30 years, creating an exceptional depth of experience that has helped preserve traditional manufacturing knowledge while embracing modern pharmaceutical standards," Roz commented. "This expertise is available not only to practitioners but also to community pharmacies seeking guidance on products, availability and homeopathic medicines, giving retailers confidence when supporting customers interested in complementary healthcare."

Supporting community pharmacy

As awareness of natural healthcare has grown, community pharmacy has become an increasingly important part of the Helios business.

Roz commented: "Consumers are taking greater responsibility for their own health and wellbeing and are actively seeking natural options to complement conventional medicine. This has created opportunities for pharmacies to expand their self-care offering with trusted products that are manufactured to recognised quality standards.



"Many employees have been with Helios for more than 20 or even 30 years, creating an exceptional depth of experience."

"Helios occupies a unique position within the sector as both a registered pharmacy, regulated by the General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC), and a UK manufacturer of homeopathic medicines. This combination allows the company to offer not only an extensive retail range but also the expertise and professional support that pharmacy

teams value. We believe community pharmacy will play an increasingly important role in providing access to trusted natural healthcare products, and Helios looks forward to working with more pharmacies as consumer demand for complementary healthcare continues to grow."

Today, the Helios retail range includes licensed individual remedies, combination remedies, tissue salts, creams and first aid products designed to help customers manage common acute conditions seen every day across the pharmacy counter. Products are supported with point-of-sale material, responsive customer service and training for pharmacy teams where required. In addition, Helios offers a Pharmacy Specials service, giving pharmacies access to its extensive remedy bank for bespoke customer requirements, supported by fast turnaround times and dedicated pharmacy support. Among the company's most successful retail products is Helios Sleep, which has become one of its top selling remedies.

Roz advised: "Its success has been recognised through multiple industry awards, including Best Natural Sleep Product from several leading natural health publications, including *Natural Pharmacy Business*. Alongside the wider Helios range of award-winning combination remedies, it reflects the company's commitment to developing products that meet genuine consumer needs while remaining true to the principles of homeopathy."

Looking to the future

Helios is focused on sustainable growth, NPD and supporting the evolving needs of community pharmacy, practitioners and consumers alike. And although deeply rooted in traditional homeopathy, Helios continues to innovate.

New product development begins by listening to practitioners, pharmacists and customers, identifying emerging needs. Every stage of production is carefully controlled, from the sourcing of raw materials through to manufacture, potentiation, packaging and distribution. Products intended for over-the-counter sale are registered with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), ensuring compliance with Good Manufacturing Practice and rigorous quality standards.

Roz commented: "Several exciting projects are already in development, while

investment in manufacturing, responsible sourcing and customer support will ensure Helios continues to meet the highest standards for years to come."

And to the 40th anniversary; to mark the milestone, this November, Helios will host a special event bringing together the people who helped shape the business over the past four decades. Alongside the current team, former employees who made significant contributions during their many years with the company have been invited back to celebrate.

Roz explained: "The event reflects one of the company's defining strengths – its people. Many members of the Helios team have devoted decades to the business, building an extraordinary depth of knowledge, experience and commitment that continues to underpin the quality and service for which Helios is known.

"In true Helios style, the celebrations

will also showcase the personalities behind the company. Entertainment will be provided by the Helios Band, featuring members of the Helios team – including Managing Director, John, on keyboards – alongside colleagues from Quality Control and Manufacturing departments, highlighting the close-knit culture that is at the heart of the business.

"For Helios, the anniversary is not simply about celebrating 40 years. It is an opportunity to thank the pharmacies, customers and dedicated staff whose loyalty and support have helped build the company into what it is today. Looking ahead, Helios remains committed to the same values that inspired John and Maya when they founded the company: quality, integrity, innovation and exceptional service. Those principles have guided the business for four decades and continue to shape its vision for the future."

PDA update



Championing inclusive pharmacy practice

In a regular column for *Natural Pharmacy Business*, the Pharmacists' Defence Association (PDA) details the focus of the recent EDI Networks Conference 2026.

Pharmacists, pharmacy students and trainees from across the UK gathered for the PDA's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Networks Conference, a dynamic event focused on advancing inclusivity within the profession.

Held in Birmingham and online, the event brought together the PDA's four EDI networks – Ability, BAME, LGBT+ and NAWP – to share experiences and explore what truly inclusive pharmacy practice looks like in action.

The keynote address from Melanie Holloway, Diversity, Inclusion and Participation Manager at NHS England, highlighted the distinction between diversity and inclusion, stressing representation alone is not enough to create equitable workplaces. She emphasised that inclusive practice leads to better decision-making, stronger teams, and safer patient care, and described networks as a critical source of insight, influence and cultural change. A central theme of the keynote was intersectionality, understanding how overlapping identities shape people's experiences at work. Holloway drew on data to illustrate ongoing inequalities in pharmacy, including disparities in career progression, discrimination, and representation in leadership. She challenged employers to better understand lived experiences to drive meaningful change.

Melanie said: "The commitment from attendees stood out immediately, particularly given the event took place on a Saturday, and it was fantastic to see so many people engaging so thoughtfully. The sessions offered a real insight into the impactful work being led through member networks, and the mix of experience in the room made for valuable and open conversations. A strong focus on intersectionality was a highlight, ensuring the conversations reflected the full breadth of people's lived experiences."

Each of the four EDI Networks led a session, where NAWP explored barriers facing women in pharmacy.

Lourette Latif Philips, President of the NAWP Network, said: "I was inspired by the openness, honesty, and enthusiasm shown



throughout the event. It was wonderful to see colleagues from our four networks coming together to share experiences, learn from one another and explore practical ways to make our profession more inclusive. The conversations were insightful, thought-provoking, and a reminder of the positive impact when we work collectively."

The BAME Network shared practical advice on visibility and leadership. Lola Dabiri, President of the BAME Network, said: "It was an honour for me to articulate the essence of the PDA BAME Network: a platform providing family vibes and comradeship with no one feeling they are standing alone. I left the conference feeling energised, encouraged, and hopeful for a brighter future for pharmacists as one and all show up courageously."

The Ability Network focused on disability inclusion and reasonable adjustments, as Jyoti Buxani, President of the Ability Network, advised: "Attending the EDI Networks conference was extremely useful for all four networks."

The LGBT+ Network addressed gender-affirming care, and Adam Somerville, President of the LGBT+ Network, said: "The LGBT+ Network committee presented a session on transgender healthcare, highlighting how medicines are used to treat gender incongruence. We also discussed how recent legal changes have affected pharmacy practice. It was brilliant to hear what the other networks had been working on this year. Engagement in EDI from early career is vital to building the momentum that will carry ideas into practice."

Interactive learning from PDA Education and networking enabled delegates to build connections and share experiences. A consistent message was the importance of collaboration across networks to better understand experiences and drive change. Delegates were encouraged to move beyond discussion to action, using insight to influence practice and policy.

Nura Bakari, a pharmacy student, said: "The event was very inspiring as someone who had never been to a PDA event before. I now feel more informed about the PDA and the EDI Networks. There were speakers from different fields, which was interesting to hear, and I liked how each speaker had different activities that were interactive."

Closing the event, Dr Jayne Love, PDA Organiser and Equalities Lead, thanked the committees for their dedication, highlighting that members contribute time voluntarily alongside professional roles.

She said: "What really stood out was the strength of our collective voice. When we bring together different perspectives, different experiences, and different areas of focus, we're able to build a much fuller picture of what needs to change – and how we make that change happen."

Get involved

PDA members can join an EDI Network for £12 per year, retired members for £24, and non-PDA members for £36. Membership of networks is free for PDA student and trainee members.

• Learn more at www.the-pda.org/get-involved/networks/

MOVE MORE, live better

Anne Smyth, from Gribbin Pharmacy, in Toomebridge, Co Antrim, discusses why fitness matters more than ever and the pharmacy recommendations to support people's journey.

The world watched in awe this spring as Breaking2 and the continued pursuit of the first official sub-two-hour marathon captured global attention. Running, walking, mobility and movement are once again firmly in the spotlight – and just in time for summer.

As brighter mornings and longer evenings arrive, parks, coastal paths and local walking trails are busier than ever. From community parkruns to gentle park walks, more people are rediscovering the joy of movement. Importantly, this is not just about elite athletes or marathon medals – it is about empowering every person to take small, sustainable steps towards better health.

As pharmacists, we have an incredible opportunity to encourage patients to move more, support their joints and muscles, and improve long-term wellbeing.

Exercise: the closest thing to a miracle cure

The UK Chief Medical Officer's physical activity guidelines famously state: "If physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure." And it truly is. Regular movement has been shown to reduce the risk of:

- Coronary heart disease.
- Obesity.
- Type 2 diabetes.
- Osteoporosis.
- Depression and anxiety.
- Social isolation.
- Cognitive decline.

Exercise also improves sleep, mood, mobility, cardiovascular fitness and overall quality of life.

Importantly, physical activity is not just a 'health' issue. It builds communities,

improves workplace productivity, supports mental wellbeing and even contributes to cleaner environments through active travel. The evidence is clear: sedentary lifestyles are one of the greatest threats to modern health. Many experts now refer to inactivity as the new smoking.

Small steps matter

One of the biggest misconceptions about fitness is that people need to suddenly become runners or gym enthusiasts. In reality, the greatest health gains often come from the simplest changes. Encouraging patients to follow the below can make a profound difference over time:

- Monitor daily step counts.
- Park further away from shops.
- Take the stairs instead of lifts.
- Walk during lunch breaks.



SUPPORTING BONE, MUSCLE AND JOINT HEALTH

Exercise becomes increasingly important with age, particularly for menopausal women and older adults. Weight-bearing exercise and resistance training help:

- Maintain bone density.
- Preserve muscle mass.
- Improve balance and mobility.
- Reduce fall risk.

- Support joint flexibility.

Muscle is now increasingly recognised as one of the biggest predictors of longevity and healthy ageing. The message is simple: it is never too late to start building strength – even 10 squats per day can be a starting point.

For many patients, mindset is

half the battle. Getting started is often the hardest part. Habit stacking can help, encouraging patients to schedule movement into their routine, for example, every Tuesday and Thursday at 11am, I go for a walk.

Consistency matters far more than perfection.

have become so successful. They offer structure, achievable progression and confidence.

Patients should be reminded that fitness is a journey, not a comparison. Future health is built by the small decisions made today.

Fuelling the body properly

Movement and nutrition go hand in hand. A balanced diet centred around the below supports both performance and recovery:

- Adequate protein.
- Wholefood carbohydrates.
- Vegetables and fibre.
- Healthy fats.
- Proper hydration.

Protein intake is particularly important for muscle maintenance and recovery, especially in older adults. Many patients may also benefit from nutritional support depending on their lifestyle and activity levels. Common pharmacy recommendations can include:

- Collagen to support connective tissues, ligaments and tendons.
- Omega 3 fish oils for joint and cardiovascular health.
- Turmeric for joint support.
- B vitamins for energy metabolism.
- Creatine to support strength, muscle performance and healthy ageing.

Viridian, Revive Active, Lamberts, The Health Factory, BioCare, Paradox, Dr Wolz, Floradix, NaturePlus, Solgar and many other reputable supplement brands offer options that are tailored to different activity levels and goals.

Hydration overlooked

As temperatures rise during the summer months, hydration becomes even more important. Electrolyte support may be useful for endurance exercise, heavy sweating, outdoor activities, recovery after illness, and older adults prone to dehydration.

Popular options available in pharmacies include A.Vogel Balance Mineral Drink, LMN, ORS, and Viridian Electrolyte Fix. Available as powders, sachets and tablets, these products can help patients find a format that suits their preferences and routine.

Recovery matters too

With increased activity often comes muscle soreness, minor strains and recovery challenges. Pharmacy teams can support patients with recovery solutions such as A.Vogel Arnica Gel, Pernaton joint support products, Weleda Arnica Massage Balm and Arnica Bath Soak, and Biofreeze.

Patients increasing outdoor exercise may also experience seasonal or environmental irritation, including 'runner's nose', where supportive products such as A.Vogel Sinuforce Nasal Spray may help provide relief.

Exercise and mental wellbeing

Perhaps one of the most powerful – and underappreciated – benefits of exercise is its impact on mental health. Movement boosts endorphins, improves confidence, reduces stress and creates social connection. Walking groups, running clubs and parkruns are not only fitness initiatives; they are community wellbeing initiatives.

Exercise may genuinely be one of the most underutilised antidepressants available.

ENJOY THE PROCESS

Fitness should not feel like punishment, it should feel enjoyable and sustainable. Pharmacies can encourage patients to:

- Invest in supportive footwear and wear comfortable clothing.
- Use sunglasses and SPF to protect skin outdoors.
- Listen to music or podcasts.
- Walk with friends.
- Celebrate progress.
- The goal is not perfection. The goal is simply to start. Whether someone begins with a marathon training plan or a five-minute walk around the block, every step counts. And their future self will thank them for it.

- Stand more frequently throughout the day.
- Begin with a short daily walk.

The UK guidelines recommend adults complete 150 minutes of moderate activity weekly (such as brisk walking), or 75 minutes of vigorous activity (such as running), plus muscle-strengthening activities at least twice weekly. However, the guidance also highlights an important message: any activity is better than none, and even relatively small increases in movement improve health outcomes.

Couch to 5K – and every journey in between

Not everyone begins in the same place. Some people are marathon training, while others are simply trying to walk around the block without pain or breathlessness. That is why initiatives like the NHS Couch to 5K

Life in work

Each issue, *Natural Pharmacy Business* delves into the working life of a well-known figure in the industry. This issue, we find out more about [Jenny Chiu's](#) journey to becoming Chief Marketing Officer at DR.VEGAN.

Twenty years spent building brands brought Jenny Chiu to the supplement brand, DR.VEGAN earlier this year as its Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) and she wasted no time making her mark. Notably, Jenny headed up a recent campaign, where the brand absorbed the cost of VAT on its PMS Hero product.

This is among a range of achievements for Jenny, whose career started after an Economics and Management degree at Oxford.

She explained: "Marketing was the natural landing spot because it sits right at the intersection of consumer psychology and commercial results. I started out on both the agency and client side early in my career, which gave me a grounding in direct marketing before I moved into brand-building and performance-led roles. From there, I built up 20-plus years across performance, CRM, and brand, working in beauty, wellness, and DTC."

And what was it about marketing generally that Jenny enjoyed?

"It's the combination of creativity and accountability. You get to have a genuinely good idea and then watch it play out commercially within weeks. It's one of the few disciplines you're both the strategist and the storyteller and still judged on hard outcomes rather than just good ideas. Marketing in a small business is especially rewarding because you see that whole loop even faster, you're close enough to the customer, product, and numbers that you can make a call, act on it, and watch it move the business, without layers of process in between."

It was after working for Cult Beauty that the DR.VEGAN job came up.

"I joined Cult Beauty in December 2013, initially part of the founding leadership team, rising to CMO and stayed until 2022. After that, I spent a few years as an independent consultant



and advisor across beauty and wellness, before joining DR.VEGAN as CMO at the end of February this year," she explained, adding that this was her first entry into the natural health market. I've been moving toward health and wellness for a while; at Cult Beauty, I launched the first female sexual health and wellness category on a beauty platform, and more recently, I advised Renude, an AI skincare technology company. What I enjoy about natural health specifically is that the product has to actually work, so the marketing has to be evidence-led, rather than aspirational."

And what appealed to her about DR.VEGAN?

Jenny explained: "DR.VEGAN is founder-led, mission-driven, and has a genuinely loyal base. The opportunity to build the marketing function almost from scratch, across paid, retention, brand, and international markets, at a business still small enough to move fast was the real draw. It's the kind of role you see the direct line between a decision you make on a Tuesday and the business outcome a few weeks later."

The CMO role is a busy one, and Jenny noted: "I own marketing strategy end to end, brand and creative direction, growth and performance marketing, CRM and retention. I manage agency

relationships and run campaign strategy across eight international markets, and work closely with Gordon, our CEO and founder, to define our business objectives and direction of growth. Because we're a small business, it's a genuinely fast-paced environment, decisions need to be made quickly, but always with the overall strategy in mind. No two days look the same, which is what draws me to scale-up businesses, and I get a lot of satisfaction from managing and growing the team."

Looking in detail at her work, Jenny pinpointed the VAT campaign.

"We built a campaign framing PMS support as essential, rather than a discretionary purchase, and used that positioning to justify absorbing VAT on our PMS product, rather than passing it to the customer," Jenny explained. "For me, this came from frustration; women have been told for so long to just take a painkiller or grab a hot water bottle, when actually there's a product that could make a real difference to how they feel. I wanted to speak to an audience that's often ignored, and to make sure this product was accessible, rather than gatekept by an extra tax. It was as much about raising awareness, making sure women knew this option existed and could get hold of it, as it was about the campaign itself."

And to her career achievements, Jenny went on: "At DR.VEGAN, I'm proudest of the VAT campaign, building a marketing strategy grounded in real customer and product economics rather than assumptions. Same skill set as Cult Beauty, just applied where the stakes are health, not just beauty."

"At Cult Beauty, I was part of the original leadership team from 2013 and helped take the business from £1.5m to over £140m in annual revenue in eight years, generating a 157x ROI for equity investors, while the company featured in *The Sunday Times* Fast Track 100 for three years."



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