

No more over-the-counter codeine: consumer protection, better choices

The Consumers Health Forum is launching a national campaign to ensure people understand why withdrawing codeine from over-the-counter sale is good for their health.

“Low dose codeine products that have been available over the counter are no better and often less effective than other analgesics but have much more harmful side effects,” the CEO of the Consumers Health Forum, Leanne Wells, said.

“Yet its withdrawal on 1 February from direct sale has prompted a vigorous debate. This has highlighted the need to get a cut-through message to the community on evidence-based treatment for pain.

“Medical leaders and public health authorities throughout Australia have strongly supported the decision to make codeine available only by prescription --- following the example of 26 other nations.

“There is a good news health story to be told here: reducing hazardous use of a toxic, addictive medication and replacing it with information about more effective remedies, including other medications and pain relief therapies.

“To ensure consumers hear the healthiest message on pain and codeine, the Consumers Health Forum is launching a “storycard” initiative aimed at starting conversations to get the right story across.

Contact: Mark Metherell, 0429 111 986

Consumers shaping health

“Sets of six storycards with key messages and relevant illustrations are being distributed through national, state and regional health and community organisations to help people with their pain management and to find alternatives to over-the-counter codeine medications.

“The aim of the storycards is to start a conversation whether between health professionals and consumers, via Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, or with families and friends.

“The storycard enables you to add information and web links relating to your profession or group.

“They can be printed as postcards for use at home, at desk, in the surgery or tea room...or even as a “sample bag” or as freebies at events.

“Or they could be included in presentations or as part of webinars and public meetings.

“It is important consumers get the right information now and into the future.

“The challenge of this change doesn’t stop on 1 February when codeine products can no longer be sold over-the-counter.

“The Consumers Health Forum will be distributing the storycard material to health and community organisations around Australia so that as many people as possible hear the fact-based message,” Ms Wells said.

See the links below for “No more over-the-counter” storycards and supporting documentation:

- How to use the Consumers Health Forum Storycards
<https://chf.org.au/sites/default/files/codeine-project-cards-a4.pdf>

Contact: Mark Metherell, 0429 111 986

Consumers shaping health

- Storycards at A4 size
<https://chf.org.au/sites/default/files/codeine-project-cards-a4.pdf>
- Storycards at DL size
<https://chf.org.au/sites/default/files/codeine-project-cards-dl.pdf>
- Presentation Slides to inform others of the Storycards
<https://chf.org.au/sites/default/files/codeine-project-slides.pdf>

ENDS

Contact: Mark Metherell, 0429 111 986

Consumers shaping health