

## Ask a Patient Health News April 3 2022

### Health News: April 3, 2022

- **Pfizer** is recalling six lots of hypertension pills due to the presence of nitrosamine, a potential carcinogen. Affected pills include **Accuretic** as well as two authorized generics distributed by Greenstone (quinapril and hydrochlorothiazide and quinapril HCl/hydrochlorothiazide). Accuretic is an ACE inhibitor used to treat high blood pressure. Check the announcement for lot numbers and more product photos.

[Accuretic safety recall - FDA announcement](#)

- The U.S. House [passed a bill](#) that would limit a patient's out of pocket cost for insulin to \$35 a month, but it does not lower the overall price of **insulin**, in effect shifting the high cost to insurers. The bipartisan (Shaheen and Collins) Senate version goes broader by helping to lower the underlying cost of insulin; that bill aims to eliminate the discounts that drug companies pay to the middlemen known as pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) for the insulin.

<https://news.yahoo.com/shaheen-says-she-agreement-principle-201841589.html>

### Nutrition News

- The FDA is proposing to study a "Healthy" label for **packaged foods**. The goal is to "improve dietary patterns in the United States to help reduce the burden of diet-related chronic diseases and advance health equity." Use of the symbol would be voluntary and would be available for food products that meet the [FDA's definition of "healthy."](#) The agency plans to conduct two studies to evaluate consumer understanding of what a "healthy" symbol means on package mock-ups and compare symbol prototypes.

<https://www.fooddiver.com/news/fda-will-conduct-research-on-front-of-pack-healthy-symbol/621040/>



Sample "Healthy Symbols" labels proposed by FDA (from [Federal Regulations](#) appendix)

Check out 44 comments from individuals and industry on the concept of "healthy" labels:

<https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FDA-2021-N-0336/comments>

### Gut Health News

- Scientists at Singapore's Nanyang Technological University have developed a unique edible coating that helps beneficial bacteria in **probiotics** successfully reach the intestine once they are ingested. Probiotics have been shown to help promote a healthy gut flora. Many studies find that the bulk of probiotics delivered in commercial supplements and yogurts die off within the first 30 minutes of exposure to the acidic environment of the stomach. The study was published in *Carbohydrate Polymers*.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2022/03/220325093821.htm>

- Five grams of **plastic particles** on average enter the **human gastrointestinal tract** per person per week, an amount roughly equivalent to the weight of a **credit card**. Whether ingested micro- and nanoplastics (MNPs) pose a health risk is being investigated in numerous studies but is largely unknown to date. Experimental studies indicate that MNPs passing through the gastrointestinal tract lead to changes in the composition of the gut microbiome. A research team from Medical University of Vienna summarized the current state of knowledge in a review article published in *Exposure & Health*.

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2022/03/220324130253.htm>

- In the April edition of Public Citizen's *Worst Pills Best Pills*, the nausea and diabetic gastroparesis drug **metoclopramide** (brand

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name **Gimoti** nasal spray and **Reglan** tablet) was reviewed and designated a "limited use" drug, due to the likelihood of extreme side effects such as the movement disorder **tardive dyskinesia (TD)**. They note that metoclopramide should be used only temporarily (for less than 12 weeks) to treat severe gastroesophageal reflux disease that has not responded to acid-suppressing medications, such as histamine-2 blockers (like cimetidine [Tagamet HB] and famotidine [Pepcid AC]) or proton pump inhibitors (like esomeprazole [Nexium] and omeprazole [Prilosec]).

<https://www.worstpills.org/newsletters/recent-postings> (summary only; full article is paywalled)

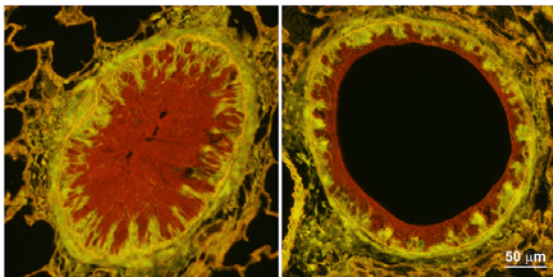
**Related:** read reviews on Ask a Patient for [Reglan experiencing TD](#) or movement symptoms or the [Adverse Event Report](#) for metoclopramide products, which lists the most common side effects reported to the FDA.

- Nearly half of all older adults now die with a **diagnosis of dementia** listed on their medical record, up 36% from two decades ago, a University of Michigan study shows. But that sharp rise may have more to do with better public awareness, more detailed medical records and Medicare billing practices than an actual rise in the condition, the researchers say.

<https://ihpi.umich.edu/news/half-older-adults-now-die-dementia-diagnosis-sharply>

- A research team from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, Stanford Medicine, and Ulm University developed a drug to treat the **uncontrolled secretion of mucins** in the airways. In patients with common lung diseases like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), cystic fibrosis (CF), and lung disease resulting from cancer, "thick mucus can block the airways and cause symptoms ranging from a mild cough to very serious decreases in lung function," said Burton Dickey, M.D., professor of Pulmonary Medicine at MD Anderson and co-corresponding author of the study. The stapled peptide treatment, called "SP9" will be further refined before moving to human studies, and may enter clinical trials in a couple of years. The study was published in *Nature*.

<https://www.mdanderson.org/newsroom/novel-therapy-could-help-people-with-asthma-copd-cystic-fibrosis-and-cancer-related-lung-disease.h00-159538167.html>



Airways in a model of asthma showing no treatment (left) and treatment with SP9 (right).

Image above depicts airways showing no treatment (left) and with SP9 treatment (right). Source: [mdanderson](#)

- Staying "**well hydrated**" in middle age may **lower the risk of developing heart failure** later in life, according to a study by the Laboratory of Cardiovascular Regenerative Medicine at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI). Researchers analyzed information from more than 11,000 adults ages 45 to 66 and followed them for 25 years. To examine hydration levels, the researchers looked at the levels of sodium in the participants' blood, which increases as a person's fluid levels decrease. The study authors recommend that in general, women drink about **6 to 8.5 cups** (1.5 to 2 liters) and men drink about **8.5 to 12.5 cups** (2 to 3 liters) of **fluids a day**. The study was published in *European Heart Journal*.

<https://www.livescience.com/hydration-heart-failure>

### Panels and Podcasts for Healthcare Consumers

- Here are some upcoming radio programs hosted by [Aging Matters'](#) Cheryl Besendorf:

#### Alcohol Use Disorders

Tuesday, April 5, 2022: <https://wera.fm/listen-live/>

2:00pm-3:00pm Gerald Marti, MD, Retired Commander, U.S. Public Health Service and Past President, Maryland Chapter, American Society of Addiction Medicine

#### Kidney Disease and Transplantation

Tuesday, April 12, 2022: <https://wera.fm/listen-live/>

2:00pm-3:00pm

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<https://www.askapatient.com/news/newsletter-archive/>

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Guest: Jennifer Ehlin Verbesey, MD, Director, Living Donor Kidney Transplantation, MedStar Georgetown University Hospital Transplant Institute

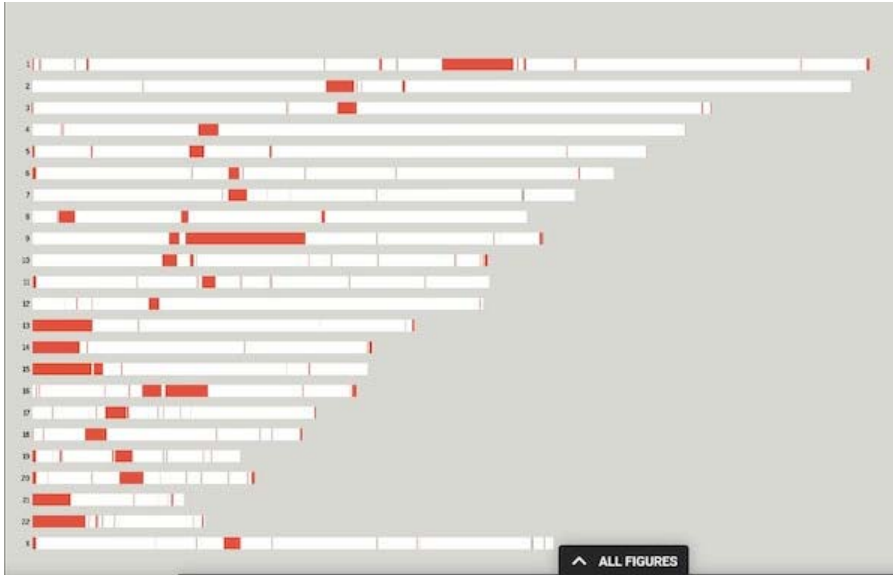
### Parkinson's Disease

Tuesday, April 26, 2022 <https://wera.fm/listen-live/>

2:00pm-3:00pm

Guest: John Lehr, President & CEO, The Parkinson's Foundation

- The first full, "gapless" **human genome** has been published nearly two decades after researchers first sequenced the majority of the roughly 3 billion letters contained in human DNA. The Human Genome Project was hailed worldwide when it was completed in 2003, but about 15% of the genome was still missing. In 2013, the gap of unsequenced DNA was reduced to about 8%. The new, complete work was achieved by the "**Telomere to Telomere Consortium**" of scientists led by the National Human Genome Research Institute, the University of California, Santa Cruz and the University of Washington in Seattle finally fills in the last 8% of [DNA](#) letters, or base pairs.



On the image above, each bar is a linear visualization of a chromosome, with the chromosome number shown at left. Red segments denote previously missing sequences that the T2T Consortium resolved.

Image source: "[Filling the gaps](#)" special issue of *Science*.

Whose DNA was sequenced for this massive project? According to *Science News*, the old reference genome is a **conglomerate of the DNA from more than 60 people**. The new, complete genome is the genome of a **complete hydatidiform mole**, a sort of tumor that arises when a sperm fertilizes an empty egg and the father's chromosomes are duplicated. In the new Telomere Consortium project, 23 single chromosomes were sequenced, including an X chromosome.

<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/human-genome-complete-dna-genetics>

- A Washington DC mother and clinical psychologist reached her wit's end when her teenage daughter's house guest got sick with what seemed to be the same mysterious illness that the whole family had recently experienced. The **flu-like illness** had a pattern; one or more of them would start to feel better, but within hours their symptoms would return. The family consulted primary care doctors in a fruitless attempt to identify the cause of their headaches, dizziness, vomiting and exhaustion. Check out Sandra Boodman's latest **medical mystery**.

[Philadelphia Inquirer health story](#)

### Covid-19 News and Statistics

As of March 31, 2022; 95% of the U.S. population lives in a community with low Covid-19 transmission levels, and 99.4% are in areas with low or medium levels of Covid-19 transmission. Use this CDC interactive [tool](#) to check the level in your city or county. The map below depicts levels on March 31, 2022.

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Want to find the right nutrients to support lowered cholesterol and lowered blood pressure? **Vitalcart** is the **grocery shopping assistant** that helps you find foods lowest in sodium, sugar, or cholesterol as you shop for groceries online.

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