

Ask a Patient Health News Sept 18 2022

Health News: September 18, 2022

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved Axsome Therapeutics' unusual ingredient combination for its new antidepressant, **Auvelity**. The medication combines 105 mg of **bupropion** (found in Wellbutrin SR and XL as well as in many generic products) with 45 mg of **dextromethorphan**, a cough suppressant found in many combination cold and flu products like Mucinex DM and also sold under the brand name **Delsym**. Axsome says this combination allows it to take effect faster than other antidepressants. The twice a day regimen means the patient is ingesting a hefty dose of dextromethorphan: 90 mg per day, which is 33% more than the maximum daily 60 mg dosage listed on many dextromethorphan cough/cold labels and 75% of the maximum daily dose for dextromethorphan-only meds.

<https://medcitynews.com/2022/08/better-late-than-never-axsome-depression-drug-is-approved-a-year-after-fda-delay/>

These drug labels indicate ingredient strengths:

Drug Label, 90 mg per day: [Auvelity](#)

Example Drug Label, 60 mg dextromethorphan max per day: [DM Cough/Congestion](#)

Example Drug Label, 120 mg dextromethorphan max per day: [Delsym Maximum Strength](#)

- A new federal law went into effect in April that gives the FDA authority over the marketing of "non-tobacco nicotine products," including **synthetic nicotine**. The law applies not only to vaping products but to products like gum, gummies, and lozenges, which are sold over-the-counter and online as smoking cessation products. Right now, the FDA is in the process of receiving marketing applications for such products. The FDA made a recent example of one company by sending it a letter warning that it was illegally marketing its **Krave** brand **nicotine gummies**, which had not received FDA authorization. The product, which the company has since discontinued, resembled **candy** that the FDA said could appeal to children. Many other **nicotine gum** products look like **candy-coated** gum, but have so far not been targeted with FDA warnings.

<https://medcitynews.com/2022/08/fda-warning-letter-puts-maker-of-nicotine-gummies-in-a-sticky-situation/>



Example of nicotine gummies product removed from the market after an FDA warning letter



Example of nicotine chewing gum product used for quitting smoking

- **Sports betting** in the United States is an exploding industry, with online gambling companies like DraftKings, Bet365, FanDuel, and Caesars promoting legalization in a growing number of states. In the 31 states and the District of Columbia where sports betting is now legal, fans of all ages are bombarded with what some call "predatory" ads. **Children** and young adults are

2

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the **fastest growing segment** of gamblers, Pew Research Center reports, and most never learn about gambling dangers. While some states resist teaching about it (gambling in some states provides education funds), other states are responding. For example, Virginia will soon begin including educational information on risks of gambling in its **substance misuse curriculum**.

But will this be enough? "What we're not taking into account," said Brianne Doura-Schawohl, a lobbyist on problem gambling issues, "is the normalization in our culture of gambling, and how quickly that's happened—practically overnight—and how that affects the kids." **Addiction specialists** say that governments placing gambling measures on the ballot have not adequately measured the cost-benefit analysis of what treatment will cost for the inevitable new slew of gambling addicts that will need **mental health services**.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/sports/more-sports/as-sports-betting-goes-mainstream-addiction-experts-are-on-high-alert/ar-AA11w02U>

Pew Research: <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2022/07/12/as-sports-betting-grows-states-tackle-teenage-problem-gambling>

Probiotics: Potential for Disease Treatment & Prevention

Probiotics are considered "**good bacteria**" because they are found naturally in the **gastrointestinal tract** and help the body function properly. Many people have found probiotics supplements and foods that contain them to be helpful for conditions like **irritable bowel syndrome**, **antibiotic-associated diarrhea**, and **eczema**. But the the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has not approved any health claims for probiotics.

Recognizing that strong scientific evidence supporting probiotics for most conditions is lacking, National Institutes of Health's Office of Complementary & Integrative Health conducted a workshop to identify what research is needed in order for "microbiome therapeutics" to be targeted for both **specific disease treatment** and **prevention**. In particular, workshop participants agreed that since between two-thirds and three-quarters of the enzymes produced by the gut microbiota still lack "functional annotation," we need a better directory of microbiota. Also, the concept of "healthy gut microbiota" needs definition and should include investigation of the **entire microbiota** (bacterial, fungal, and viral).

Precision Probiotics Workshop recording & executive summary:

<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/news/events/precision-probiotic-therapies-challenges-and-opportunities>

Fermented foods are made through the growth and activity of a variety of live microbial cultures. Many of these foods are rich sources of live and potentially beneficial microbes. "All Recipes" identifies some of them.

<https://www.allrecipes.com/article/probiotic-foods/>

National Institute of Health's Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) has **registered dietitians on staff who will reply to inquiries made through its web site** with scientific and evidence-based information. Check the Frequently Asked Questions first to see if your questions have already been answered.

https://ods.od.nih.gov/HealthInformation/ODS_Frequently_Asked_Questions.aspx

Contact with Questions:

https://ods.od.nih.gov/About/Contact_Us.aspx

The ODS has an upcoming webinar:

"Defining the Public Health Threat of Dietary Supplement Fraud" with Dr. John Spink, Director of the Michigan State University Food Fraud Initiative

Date: Wednesday, September 21, 2022

Time: 11:00 AM

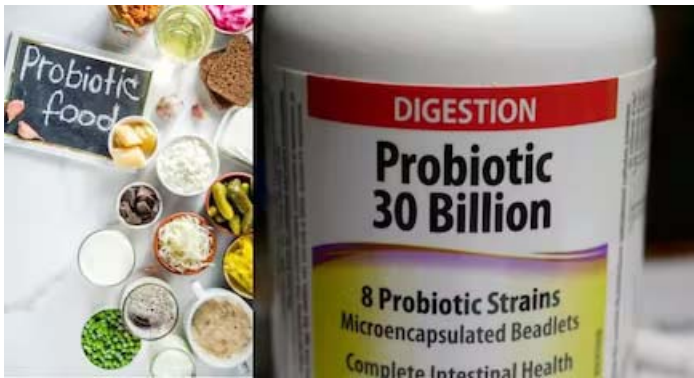
Contact ODS for viewing information: ODS@nih.gov

2

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

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Next time: a look at probiotics **strains**, **spore-based** probiotics, and **enzyme** supplements.



- The 29-year-old investment research analyst woke up one morning and was shocked to realize that he was unable to lift or extend his fingers, which felt inexplicably stiff. This was sudden and strange, as his hand had been fine the day before. Over the next 10 months, Brenner would consult an orthopedic hand surgeon; a physiatrist, a medical doctor who specializes in physical rehabilitation; multiple neurologists; a neurosurgeon and a plastic surgeon in a circuitous, time-sensitive effort to fix his **partially paralyzed hand**. Check out Sandra Boodman's latest **medical mystery**.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/09/03/medical-mystery-immobile-hand/>

- With the more contagious but apparently less deadly Omicron variant responsible for all new cases of Covid-19 in the U.S., **has COVID-19 become no more dangerous than the flu** for most people? Early in the pandemic, COVID was estimated to be 10 times more lethal than the flu, fueling many people's fears. NPR's Rob Stein interviews scientists with differing viewpoints on the topic, including **Monica Gandhi**, an infectious disease specialist at the University of California, San Francisco, and **Anthony Fauci**, White House's medical adviser, and director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2022/09/16/1122650502/scientists-debate-how-lethal-covid-is-some-say-its-now-less-risky-than-flu>

- As of September 15, 2022, there are 439 (13.6%) counties, districts, or territories with a high COVID-19 Community Level, 1,154 (35.8%) counties with a medium Community Level. The number of low level communities has increased by 7.4%, a good signal for population health.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/>

Check your city or county's community level here:

<https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>

Globally, the World Health Organization reports that the number of new weekly cases decreased by 28% during the week of 5 to 11 September 2022, as compared to the previous week, with over 3.1 million new cases reported. The number of new weekly deaths decreased by 22%, as compared to the previous week, with over 11,000 fatalities reported.

<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/weekly-epidemiological-update-on-covid-19---14-september-2022>

Answer our latest quick health poll:

Have you experienced "long Covid" (lingering symptoms) from a Covid-19 illness?

- No; I haven't caught Covid
- No; had Covid after December 2021
- No; had Covid before December 2021
- Yes; had Covid after December 2021
- Yes; had Covid before December 2021

VOTE!



4

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