



Market release
5 March 2018

***Maxigesic* hits No. 1 in key Australian painkiller market**

The codeine-free painkiller *Maxigesic* is now the largest selling Paracetamol-Ibuprofen combination painkiller in Australian pharmacies.

Weekly sales data from IRI (Australia) for the post 1 February codeine rescheduling time periods of 5th -18th February shows *Maxigesic* sales now ahead of all other Paracetamol-Ibuprofen products at Australian pharmacies.¹

The rise of *Maxigesic* comes on the back of the decision by the Therapeutic Goods Association to up-schedule codeine-based painkillers from an over-the-counter (OTC) product to prescription-only. The change commenced on 1 February 2018.

Managing Director of AFT Pharmaceuticals, Dr Hartley Atkinson, says that the result is pleasing for the company.

"We're delighted that we've reached the number one position for Paracetamol-Ibuprofen combinations in the pharmacy market," says Dr Atkinson. "*Maxigesic* has always been codeine-free. So we've been talking with pharmacists about *Maxigesic* as an alternative painkiller well ahead of the February switching date."

"It also looks like our switching campaign has been a success with patients. The key message has been that *Maxigesic* is the only Paracetamol-Ibuprofen combination which,

¹ IRI (Australia) "Paracetamol and Ibuprofen Brands Weekly Sales" – current 18 February 2018.

at full dose, provides better pain relief than either OTC Paracetamol or Ibuprofen alone.² The sales data suggests that this message has resonated with lots of people who are now looking for a codeine-free painkiller.”

Maxigesic has seen especially strong sales of the larger Schedule 3 Maxigesic 30's packs.³ Dr Atkinson notes that this is significant because it means that it is pharmacists themselves who are recommending *Maxigesic* to patients.

“The 30 packs require pharmacist approval and they’re kept behind-the-counter,” says Dr Atkinson. “For us to lead this category is encouraging because there are some heavily promoted brands we’re competing against and our result has been achieved with a much lower promotional budget than some of our competition. Pharmacists clearly have confidence in *Maxigesic*.”

Dosage is also likely to be helping sales. *Maxigesic* is the only combination analgesic that can provide the maximum daily OTC dosage of Paracetamol (4000mg) and Ibuprofen (1200mg).⁴ Consequently patients who require the maximum daily dosage can use more tablets than competitor Paracetamol-Ibuprofen product equivalents, thereby generating higher sales for pharmacies.

While sales of *Maxigesic* in Australia have roughly doubled in a short time period since the beginning of this year, Dr Atkinson suggests these are early days in the post-OTC codeine market.

“Anecdotally, we know there are people who stockpiled codeine-based painkillers before the switching date. As those supplies run out, they will be coming into pharmacies to find an alternative painkiller. So while the early signs are positive for us, there is still a bit of settling to happen in the market long-term and lots of work for our team to tackle in the Australian market over the remainder of this year.”

² Merry, A. F., Gibbs, R. D., Edwards, J., Ting, G. S., Frampton, C., Davies, E. and Anderson, B. J. (2010). “Combined acetaminophen and ibuprofen for pain relief after oral surgery in adults: a randomized controlled trial” *British Journal of Anaesthesia* 104(1): 80–88.

³ Schedule 3 medicines can only be supplied from a pharmacy by or under direction of a pharmacist, and must be stored in an area of the pharmacy that is not accessible to the public.

⁴ Two tablets of Maxigesic taken every 6 hours over a 24-hour period (8 tablets maximum) whereas the dose of other Paracetamol-Ibuprofen combinations is take one tablet every 8 hours over a 24-hour period (3 tablets maximum)..

End of release

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Maxigesic® film coated tablets (Paracetamol 500mg and Ibuprofen 150mg; are a Pharmacy Medicine (S2) in packs of 10s and 12s and a Pharmacist Only (S3) Medicine in packs of 24s and 30s for the temporary relief of pain and reduction of fever. Please review the full PI before recommending, available on request from AFT Pharmaceuticals. The usual dosage for Adults and Children over 12 years is 1-2 tablets taken every 6 hours with a full glass of water, as required, up to a maximum of 8 tablets in 24 hours. Do not take more than 8 tablets in a 24 hour period. Incorrect use can be harmful. Do not use in children under 12 years or if you have kidney disease. Do not use if you have asthma or a stomach ulcer. Do not exceed the daily recommended dose. Always read the label and use strictly as directed. If symptoms persist or side effects develop, contact your healthcare professional. AFT Pharmaceuticals Pty Ltd, Sydney. Patent No. 2005260243.