BATTERY ‘ARMOUR’ PROTECTS AGAINST INGESTION DAMAGE
A new coating for button batteries, the type commonly found in watches, could help prevent burns from accidental ingestion. The pressure-sensitive coating of metal microparticles in silicone stops current from flowing when the batteries aren’t in devices.

USING FORMIC ACID TO PRODUCE AROMATICS FROM LIGNIN
Lignin is a waste product from the pulp and paper industry, and one of the few renewable sources of aromatic chemicals. A new method for the depolymerisation of lignin, using formic acid, resulted in a much higher yield of valuable low-molecular-mass aromatics.

TEST TO LINK SNAKE BITES TO SPECIFIC SPECIES DEVELOPED
A new test could identify DNA left behind in snake bites, allowing the species to be determined and the correct antidote to be administered. The study has been presented, but not yet published; the researchers also hope to develop a quick blood test.

ALZHEIMER’S DRUG PASSES BLOOD-BRAIN BARRIER
Researchers have engineered an antibody that is capable of passing through the blood-brain barrier in monkeys. It reduced levels of the amyloid-β protein, a main component of the plaques in Alzheimer’s patients. More tests are now needed in humans.

 REMOVING CONTAMINANTS FROM FRACKING WASTE WATER
US researchers have developed a method for removing contaminants from waste water produced by fracking, which reduces costs by up to 40%. The decontamination process also produces energy, and avoids risks associated with underground injection of the water.