

Why involve my pharmacist?

Whether you're in hospital, at home, in a nursing home or in the process of moving from one to another, it's good to know that your pharmacist — the drug expert — is involved in your care, making sure you get the most from your medication.

- Patients are being asked to take more responsibility for their own care, including taking medication while they recover at home. Sometimes this means juggling complicated medication schedules and learning how to use new or unusual medical devices.
- An increasing number of Canadians are taking medication to control one or more chronic conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease or asthma. Taking your medications properly allows these conditions to be better managed, helping you feel better and minimizing long-term complications.
- New and advanced medications are becoming available every day. More medications are becoming available over the counter, without the need for a prescription.

Your pharmacist is the health care professional who's ready and able to help you in all these situations.

How you can help

Before you go to the hospital, talk to your community pharmacist:

- Make sure you know all the medications you are taking, and why you are taking them.
- Ask for a list of all your prescription medications. Make sure that the list shows the exact dose of each medication that you take as well as how often you take it. Add to the list any nonprescription drugs, herbal and natural health products and vitamins you are taking. If you take medication regularly, it's always a good idea to have such a list on hand anyway, in case of emergency.
- Bring the list to the hospital with you and present it to the admissions staff so they can place it in your chart. Make sure your caregivers know the list is available.
- Ask about the medications you are already taking. You should know if they will be continued while you are in the hospital.

Once you are ready to be discharged, your hospital pharmacist can help you make the transition from hospital to home. Here's how you can help:

- Ask to speak with the hospital pharmacist before you leave the hospital.
- Make sure you understand how to take your medicine properly before you go home.
- Be certain about whether you are to continue taking the medications you were taking before your admission to hospital.
- Tell the hospital pharmacist, doctor and nurse the name of the community pharmacy you regularly use.
- Ask for a list of medications you are taking and give it to your doctor and community pharmacist.
- Plan to make contact with your community pharmacy as soon as possible after your discharge from hospital.

Never assume that any question is silly. When it comes to taking medicine properly and safely, the right information is essential. Always get answers to all your questions.

Talk to your pharmacist.

More About Your Pharmacist

Your Pharmacist

- is a licenced health care professional with a minimum of 4 to 5 years of university training and practical experience
- is a medication expert and the right health professional to help you get the best from your medicine
- is an expert resource for you, your doctor, your nurse and other health professionals
- keeps a computer record of all your prescription medications and checks your prescription to make sure the drug, dose and instructions are best for you.

Pharmacists practise in many settings:

- community pharmacies (drug stores)
- hospitals / nursing homes
- universities
- pharmaceutical companies
- governments

Your health checklist

Your pharmacist can help you make the best choices for your health. Always:

- choose a pharmacy that meets your needs and continue to use that pharmacy
- take your medications as directed
- keep your pharmacist up to date on any prescription, nonprescription or herbal or natural health products you are taking
- talk to your pharmacist if you are unsure about how to take or store your medications or if you are having any problems with your medications
- ask your pharmacist to help you select nonprescription medications.

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Pharmacists Care,



No Matter Where

Pharmacists care, no matter where

In the community, hospital or nursing home, at the outpatient clinic or even online ... whenever you have questions about your medication or need help with your health care, your pharmacist is there!

In the community

As the most accessible health care provider, your community pharmacist is often your first point of contact with the health care system and is an excellent source of health information.

Your community pharmacist can help you with just about any question you have about medication or situations relating to your own or your family's health, including

- helping you understand what your medications are for and how they will work for you
- reviewing all your medications to make sure you are not taking drugs that may interact and cause unnecessary side effects, and explaining how to take your medications to ensure you are getting the most from them
- selecting the right nonprescription medicines or herbal and natural health products, and helping you decide whether it's safe to treat your symptoms by yourself or whether you should see a doctor or other health care professional
- working with other health professionals to manage chronic conditions such as diabetes, asthma, high blood pressure or high cholesterol levels
- making treatment recommendations for conditions such as coughs and colds, allergies, athlete's foot, minor pain, upset stomach, vaginal yeast infections, dry eyes
- advising on lifestyle changes, such as how to quit smoking or how to have a better night's sleep.



In the hospital

Your hospital pharmacist is an important part of the health care team. He or she monitors your drug therapy to ensure that it is safe and effective and works with your health care team and you to make sure you receive the best results from your medication while you are in the hospital.

During a hospital stay, you might be prescribed new medications. The dose of some medications you were already taking may be changed or the medication may be stopped. Your hospital pharmacist will work with you to keep track of all these changes.

It is important that the hospital pharmacist knows about all the medications you are taking when you come into the hospital and that your community pharmacist knows what medications you are taking when you go home.

It is also important for you to convey these changes to your family doctor and any specialists involved in your care. Ask your community and hospital pharmacist for help.

A constant "seamless" flow of information ensures the best care for YOU.



Seamless care

"Seamless care" is an important health care term that affects you and your family's health. It refers to the continuous, uninterrupted care delivered to you by your pharmacists and other health care providers wherever you are, whether at home, in hospital or in a nursing home, or particularly when you are moving between any of these settings.

For example, if you take medication regularly and will be entering hospital for a procedure, ask your community pharmacist to work with you to ensure that your health care team in hospital is aware of all the medication you are taking.

Ask for a complete list of your prescription medications and add to it any nonprescription drugs, herbal and natural health products and vitamins you may be taking.

This works in the reverse too. When you are discharged from hospital, it is important that information about your medications be passed from your



caregivers in the hospital back to your community pharmacist, doctor and other caregivers in the community.

Seamless care helps avoid medication errors, such as "double dosing", which can occur if you are prescribed a drug that is in the same "family" or "class" of drug you are already taking. This might happen if you are moving between hospital and home, or if you are seeing more than one doctor. With thousands of medications available, your

pharmacist — the drug expert — is best equipped to determine if two drugs you are taking are the same or similar or may interact, and can discuss this with you and your doctor.

Ask your pharmacist — both in the community and in the hospital — to ensure that your care is "seamless". Don't let your medication needs, and your health, slip through the cracks. Keep your pharmacist and doctor informed about all your medications.

Your pharmacist can help you make the best choices for your health, no matter where he or she practises.

Have you talked with your pharmacist lately?



**PHARMACY
AWARENESS WEEK**

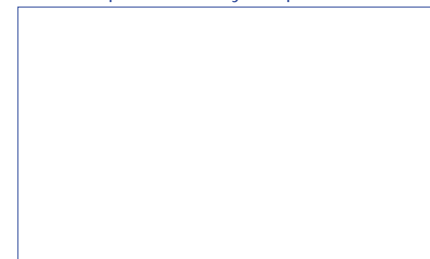
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