

10 A health professional you can trust

Pharmacists are the most accessible healthcare providers—as close as the nearest pharmacy. Research consistently ranks them as one of the top trusted professionals in Canada. Pharmacists

must pass comprehensive licensing exams and are required to continuously update their knowledge on medication and disease management. They are required to follow the rigorous standards of practice and code of ethics set by their provincial pharmacy licensing bodies.

8 tips on medication use

There are numerous things you can do to ensure your medication works the way it's supposed to:

- 1. Take as directed:** Talk with the pharmacist about how to take your medication and carefully follow those instructions.
- 2. Check before you mix:** Many nonprescription and herbal products can have a negative effect on prescription drugs. Before you use such a product, consult with the pharmacist to ensure it's safe to take along with other medications you may be on.
- 3. Don't use old medications:** Most prescription drugs lose their potency a year after their dispensary date. Check the expiry date stamped on nonprescription and herbal products.
- 4. Don't stop your medication abruptly:** If you do, you could risk having a relapse. Finish the entire course of treatment unless otherwise advised.
- 5. Help the medicine go down:** If it's hard for you to swallow pills, the pharmacist may be able to provide your medication in a chewable tablet or liquid form, or even cut your pills in half for you (always check before splitting the medication yourself since some drugs don't work correctly if they are altered in this way).
- 6. Don't borrow medication:** While it may be tempting to use medication from other family members and friends, the drugs may not be right for you and could cause serious side effects.
- 7. Give your child the right dose:** It's more important to follow the dosing instructions by weight—not age—on children's nonprescription medications. If it's difficult for your child to take several doses of prescription medication a day, ask the pharmacist if there's a once-a-day formulation.
- 8. Remember, the pharmacist is here to help:** Pharmacists are the most knowledgeable and trusted health professionals when it comes to medication use. If you are experiencing side effects, your medication isn't working the way it should, or if you have any questions at all about your medication and how it's making you feel, be sure to talk to your pharmacist.

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Your Pharmacist is an important member of your winning healthcare team



From advising on proper medication use, consulting with your doctor about the right prescription, or helping you manage a chronic condition like diabetes or high blood pressure, there are many ways pharmacists can keep you in good health.

Talk to your pharmacist today

10 Pharmacists provide more than medicine

Pharmacists are medication experts with at least four to five years of specialized university training. Their role as health educators and medication/disease managers is expanding.

* Talk to your pharmacist about how his or her role is changing in your province and how this benefits you.

Pharmacists can:

Make recommendations on drug treatments: They will assess how well your medication is working and consult with your doctor to determine the appropriate treatment if your medication isn't working.

Manage specific health conditions: If you have a chronic condition, such

as diabetes, asthma or arthritis, your pharmacist can conduct a medication review to ensure you are taking your medications properly. They can also teach you how to use devices such as diabetes monitors and asthma inhalers.

Determine which nonprescription or herbal products are right for you: Pharmacists are trained in the proper use of nonprescription and herbal products. They will help you select the right product from the shelves and advise you on whether it is safe to use in conjunction with any other medications you may be taking.

Advise on how to adopt a healthy lifestyle to prevent disease: Quitting smoking, losing weight, developing an exercise plan—all of these can have a dramatic impact on your health. Your pharmacist can offer tools, products and resources to help you in these areas.

Provide specialized services: Many pharmacies are equipped to provide services such as blood pressure monitoring and immunizations. In some provinces, pharmacists have the authority to prescribe some medications and authorize refills.

Assist in your care before and after hospitalization: Pharmacists can provide you with a list of your current medications when you are admitted to hospital and get an update on any changes made so you receive the proper medication when you're discharged.

Help you remember to take your medication: If you are on several medications, it can be confusing to keep track of all the dosage times. Your pharmacist can package these medications into convenient daily Doses to simplify the process.

10 Pharmacists and other health professionals

Teaming up for your good health
Pharmacists work together with your doctor to ensure you receive the right medication. If your pharmacist identifies a potential problem—the dosage is not correct, for example, or the medication might interfere with another medication you are taking, he or she will contact your doctor to determine the right course of treatment.

In addition to working with doctors, pharmacists also assist nurses and other health professionals—in both the community and hospital settings—by providing expert drug information and advice.

10 The benefits of using ONE pharmacy

It doesn't pay to shop around
There are several advantages to using only one pharmacy:

- You can develop an ongoing relationship with your pharmacist so he or she will better understand your healthcare needs.
- Your medication record will be updated with each new prescription and the entire record will be stored in one location.
- Your pharmacist will be familiar with your past medication use and ensure drug problems such as allergies, interactions and medication duplications do not occur.

10 Who does what in the pharmacy?

Pharmacists and technicians work together to manage your medication needs
Pharmacists are responsible for making sure you get the right medication and correct dosage for your condition. They counsel you on how to take the medication, what side effects might

occur and what to do in case of side effects. They also check for potential drug interactions and consult with your doctor if there are any concerns about your medication.

Technicians work alongside pharmacists, and are often the ones who receive your prescription order. They assist in the manual preparation of prescriptions—counting out pills, applying instruction labels and updating medication records. They report to the pharmacist who supervises their work.

What do you know about your medication?

Take this quiz and find out. The more informed you are about your medication, the better it will work for you

- I know why my doctor prescribed this medication.
- I know exactly how and when to take this medication.
- I know how long it will take for the medicine to start working.
- I know what to do if I miss a dose.
- I know about possible side effects and what to do about them.
- I know if there is anything I should or should not eat or drink and activities I should avoid with this medication.
- I know if this medication can be affected by nonprescription or herbal products.
- I know how to store this medication.
- I know I can talk to the pharmacist about any concerns I may have about this medication.

If there are any boxes you haven't checked, speak to your pharmacist to get the information you need.

Medication minefield: Don't make these mistakes

Studies show that half of all Canadians do not take their medications exactly as prescribed. Taking medication incorrectly can cause serious harm. Be sure to avoid these common medication mistakes:

1. Not filling the prescription
2. Taking too much or too little of the medication
3. Skipping doses or taking a dose at the wrong time
4. Stopping the medication too soon
5. Not reporting side effects
6. Not discontinuing an old drug when a new one is prescribed
7. Assuming nonprescription and herbal products won't interfere with prescription medications

Talk to your pharmacist about how to get the best results with your treatment.