

# Your Community Pharmacist: More than just medicine

When you walk into your local New Zealand community pharmacy, you might be expecting to just pick up a prescription or grab some pain relief. But did you know your pharmacist can do so much more?

Pharmacists are highly trained medicine experts, but they're also an easy-to-access first stop for healthcare advice. Whether you need help managing your medications, figuring out if you need to see a doctor, or just some trusted guidance on minor health issues, your pharmacist is there for you—no appointment needed, and often at no cost!

***DID YOU KNOW*** ... Pharmacists are consistently ranked among New Zealand's most trusted professionals in surveys. You can speak to them openly, knowing that all conversations are private and confidential.

## ***Got a Question About Your Medicines? Ask Your Pharmacist!***

In New Zealand, many medicines are available without a prescription, but that doesn't mean you should guess which one is right for you. Your pharmacist can help answer questions like:

- ✓ Can I take this with my other medications?
- ✓ What are the side effects?
- ✓ What happens if I miss a dose?
- ✓ Is there a funded alternative under Pharmac?

Pharmacists know medicines inside and out and can give you personalised advice on how to take them safely and effectively. If something isn't working for you, they can often suggest a better option or speak to your doctor on your behalf.

## ***Minor Illness or Something More Serious?***

New Zealand pharmacists are trained to assess common health concerns and let you know if you need to see a GP or if they can help you right away.

They can assist with:

- ✓ Colds, flu and coughs – Advice on symptom relief and recommend over the counter medicines

- ✓ Allergies and hay fever – The best antihistamines or nasal sprays for your needs
- ✓ Skin conditions – Eczema, acne, fungal infections and sunburn solutions
- ✓ Pain management – Headaches, migraines, period pain and muscle pain relief
- ✓ Tummy troubles – Reflux, nausea, diarrhoea and constipation relief

***DID YOU KNOW ...*** Many pharmacies now offer consultations for minor ailments through funded pharmacy services, meaning you might not have to pay! If your symptoms suggest something more serious, your pharmacist will refer you to a doctor or even urgent care.

### ***Pharmacists Help with Long-Term Health Too***

If you're managing a long-term condition like diabetes, high blood pressure, asthma, or arthritis, your pharmacist plays a key role in your healthcare team.

They can:

- ✓ Help you understand your medications and how they work
- ✓ Suggest ways to manage side effects
- ✓ Offer in-store blood pressure checks
- ✓ Provide inhaler technique reviews to make sure you're getting the full benefit
- ✓ Work with your GP to ensure your medicines are the best fit for you

***DID YOU KNOW*** that our pharmacy offers **FREE** blister packing and delivery to make it easier to manage long term conditions?

### ***Vaccinations, Health Checks & More***

Many community pharmacies across Aotearoa now offer:

- ✓ Flu shots & other vaccines
- ✓ Blood pressure monitoring
- ✓ Help to quit smoking (with access to funded nicotine replacement therapy!)
- ✓ Weight management support

They can also help with:

- ✓ Emergency contraception (morning-after pill)
- ✓ Travel health advice and malaria prevention
- ✓ Safe disposal of expired or unused medicine

***DID YOU KNOW ...*** anything you discuss with your pharmacist is completely confidential. Whether it's a private health concern, a sensitive medication, or a personal question, your privacy is always respected.

### ***Your Pharmacist – Your Health Partner***

Think of your community pharmacist as more than just a place to pick up medicine. They're an approachable, knowledgeable health professional who can help you make the best decisions for your well-being.

Next time you have a health question - big or small - pop in and have a chat with your pharmacist. You might be surprised at how much they can help!

*Timea Venter*