



The Mortar & Pestle

Volume 4 Issue 5 May 2013

Stafford Pharmacy and Home Healthcare

WELCOME TO OUR PHARMACY STUDENT

The **University of Alberta** in Edmonton is home to the **Faculty of Pharmacy** in this province. As part of the curriculum, students are required to complete clinical placements in the 1st, 3rd and 4th years of study. These placements are essential in helping the students begin to use the knowledge obtained in school and put it into practice, honing their practical skills. Pharmacies across the province, including ours, volunteer to mentor students in clinical placements each year.



This month, from May 6th-31st we will have 1st year pharmacy student Amber joining us! We hope you will help us welcome Amber to our team, and allow her the opportunity to participate in your care. This will make her time with us meaningful and she will grow to love the profession of pharmacy! During her time here, Amber will be hosting a Health Awareness Day. Stay tuned for more details!

Welcome, Amber! We look forward to having you at Stafford Pharmacy this month!

UPDATE: PRESCRIPTION RENEWALS

On July 1st, 2012, pharmacists in Alberta obtained the authority to renew prescription medications for their patients. Some of you may have utilized this service, while some of you have not. In any case, here is what you need to know about it.

When the pharmacist renews your prescription medication for you, the prescription is written by the pharmacist and dispensed under his/her name (not your doctor's). Therefore, in order to renew your prescription, your pharmacist will:

- Assess your medical condition(s) and medication(s) in order to determine if the drug therapy is necessary, safe, and effective
 - This assessment may include testing your blood pressure and checking your recent blood test results
- Make a clinical judgment call
 - The pharmacist is under no obligation to renew your prescription. She can refuse to do so if she does not feel the prescription is safe for you, or that you need to see a physician for further assessment, or if more information is needed to safely renew your prescription
- Pharmacists CANNOT renew prescriptions for narcotics or other controlled prescription medications.

When one of our pharmacists assesses and renews your prescription, we will no longer fax your doctor to obtain a refill. After we extend your prescription, it will be your responsibility to make an appointment with the doctor to obtain a new prescription for the future.

****Please note that making an appointment for a medication review with one of our pharmacists BEFORE you require a prescription renewal allows for easier assessment and provision of this service.**

GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR PHARMACY VISIT

Most of us have been to a pharmacy, and most of us have had to take a prescription medication at some point in our lives. However, despite having been to a pharmacy, very few people are aware of the services that their pharmacist can provide. In this edition of the Mortar and Pestle we hope to give you a glimpse of what happens behind the pharmacy counter.

What happens when you give your pharmacist at Stafford Pharmacy a new prescription? Why does it take time to get it ready? The pharmacist is the final step in a system of checks and balances put in place to ensure that medications are used safely and effectively. Here is an example of how they do just that.

When a patient brings a new prescription to a pharmacist, the pharmacist must ensure that the medication is appropriate for the patient. This includes making sure that the medication is right for the condition, and at the right dose based on the patient's age and/or weight. The pharmacist will also verify safety by weighing the risks and benefits of the medication. A review of the patient's current medication list will help identify potential drug interactions that may result in harm. Once the pharmacist has decided that the prescribed drug is safe for the patient, the pharmacy technician prepares and packages it. Once this is complete, the pharmacist performs a final check against the original prescription to verify accuracy and completeness.

In order to ensure you are receiving safe medications, here are a few tips that you can use to help your pharmacist look out for your health!

- Use only one pharmacy and get to know your pharmacist. Allow him or her to get to know you too.
- Tell your pharmacist about any allergies you have to prescription and over-the-counter medications, food, and even flowers and outdoor pollens.
- Tell your pharmacist about any over-the-counter medications, vitamin supplements, and/or herbal supplements you are taking these are just as important as your prescribed medications.
- Freely answer any of the health related questions your pharmacist asks you; he is asking to ensure that the medications you take are safe and effective for you. The information you share with your pharmacist is confidential and protected by privacy laws.
- Never leave the pharmacy if you are unsure about the medication you are taking home with you. Ask your pharmacist questions until you are comfortable about the medication you are going to take.
- **Ask your pharmacist if you can book an appointment with him/her to ensure each of the medications you are taking are safely and effectively managing your medical conditions. Your pharmacist will make sure the medications you are taking are necessary for your health, and will work with you to set health goals. At the end of your appointment, you will be provided with an up-to-date medication list with the reasons for each medication. You should keep this with you at all times.**



For more information on the services provided at Stafford Pharmacy, speak with one of our pharmacy team members in store, or call us at 403-320-6500 ext. 1

Volume 4, Issue 5

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