

# Your pharmacist has a new role

There was a time when the family doctor's office was the most common place we could go to for healthcare and advice. But with the growing demands on our healthcare system, there's been a move to increase the scope of practice for medical professionals to increase access to primary care. Pharmacists, for example, are leading the way by embracing their role as part of the solution.

A lot of Canadians don't realize that pharmacists do so much more than filling prescriptions, says Victor Wong, a pharmacist at Shoppers Drug Mart. Pharmacists provide a range of services depending on the province. And with extended hours in most areas, we provide convenient access to healthcare advice.

Pharmacists are often available without an appointment, making them more accessible than many other healthcare providers. Here are just a few of the services you may not be aware of:

**Managing medications.** Pharmacists are medication experts and a key resource on both over-the-counter and prescription drugs. They can provide medication organizers that help ensure drugs are taken at the correct time to minimize side effects and

help achieve optimal outcomes. They also offer medication reviews—a one-on-one meeting to help individuals understand how to safely and effectively use their prescription and any over-the-counter medications. During the review, pharmacists identify any potential drug therapy problems and address them by recommending solutions such as a change in dose, a change of medication, or even a change in the way a medication is taken.

**Administering vaccinations.** As pharmacists can now administer flu vaccinations in most provinces, Canadians have increasingly come to rely on them for this important service. However, in many regions they can also administer other preventative immunizations, including most travel vaccinations and the shingles vaccine. Counselling on more than prescriptions. Pharmacists can help you select vitamins and over-the-counter products that are right for you and give health and lifestyle advice on managing common chronic conditions like arthritis and diabetes. They're also able to provide counselling on the prevention and treatment of minor ailments—everything from seasonal allergies to bug bites to head lice.



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**Q:** What do I do for a Dental Emergency?

**A:** **Toothache**  
First call your dentist. Explain your symptoms and ask to be seen as soon as possible. Then ease the pain. Take an over-the-counter pain medicine that works for you, but do not put the pills on your sore tooth. Hold an ice pack against your face at the spot of the sore tooth. Do not put a heating pad, a hot water bottle, or any other source of heat on your jaw. Heat will make things worse instead of better.

**Chipped or broken tooth**  
Broken teeth can almost always be saved. Call your dentist and explain what happened. He or she will see you right away. If it's a small break, your dentist may use a white filling to fix the tooth. If the break is serious, a root canal may be needed. Your tooth may also need a crown also called a cap.

**Knocked out tooth**  
If the knocked-out tooth is an adult (or permanent) tooth, your dentist may be able to put it back. You must act quickly. If the tooth is put back in place within 10 minutes, it has a fair chance of taking root again. After 2 hours, the chances are poor.  
If the tooth looks clean, put it back in its place (its socket). If this is not possible, or if there's a chance that the tooth might be swallowed, put it in a container of cold milk. Go to your dentist, or to the nearest dentist, right away. If you get help within ten minutes, there is a fair chance that the tooth will take root again.