

Pharmacists: Caring for you

The Health Column

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The International Pharmaceutical Federation (FIP) is the global federation representing three million pharmacists and pharmaceutical scientists worldwide. As designated by the FIP Council several years ago, **25th September** marks the annual World Pharmacists Day. FIP encourages the world's pharmacists to use this day to organise activities that promote and advocate for the role of the pharmacist in improving health in every corner of the world.



“Pharmacists: Caring for you” is the theme of this year’s World Pharmacists Day. This year’s theme was chosen to reflect the important role of pharmacists in providing care to the public, and also to highlight the emotional connection they have with their patients. The role of pharmacists has evolved from that of a provider of medicines to that of a provider of care. World Pharmacists Day, now in its sixth year, is used to highlight the impact and added value of the pharmacy profession and its role in improving health to authorities, other professions and the media, as well as to the general public.

While acknowledging World Pharmacists Day it is also worth reflecting on the work of the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia. The PSA is the peak professional body representing pharmacists throughout Australia. They set the quality standards, ethical codes, policies and provide high quality education that ensures Australia’s pharmacy consumers receive the highest quality of care. Pharmacists who are Members of the Pharmaceutical Society bear the post-nominal MPS, which is a mark of recognition that they are committed to the implementation of this excellence in practice. Ask your pharmacist if they are an MPS.

Pharmacists are readily accessible, professional healthcare providers. As highly trained health professionals, they are experts in medicines and can offer advice on the safe and effective use of these medicines because they understand health and how active ingredients in medicine work. Each and every day, pharmacists in every corner of the world act as partners to patients and other healthcare professionals with a shared vision of better health.

In Australia, pharmacy has continued to adapt and evolve with a changing healthcare environment. As the population ages and hospitals are required to service more patients than ever before, your local community pharmacy is increasing its clinical orientation and positioning itself as a primary health destination. You may have already noticed this move beyond the

dispensing of medicines into the provision of professional services and tighter integration of the pharmacist into the overall healthcare team.

Medicine reviews and health checks are becoming commonplace in most community pharmacies throughout Australia. These are conducted by pharmacists in an effort to improve patient adherence and increase their knowledge for improved health outcomes. A medicine review allows an opportunity to sit with a pharmacist to discuss your medicines and your overall health. Health checks provide an opportunity for pharmacists to conduct a short in-store check-up and risk assessment on anything from cardiovascular disease to lung health.

More and more, pharmacists are offering professional services for disease management within the walls of your local pharmacy. From immunisations to wound care, diabetes services to sleep apnoea consultations, pharmacists are keen to offer their expertise and skills in an effort to educate and encourage their customers to take vital steps towards improving their health. *Next time you're there why not ask your local pharmacist what services they offer?*

Outside of the community pharmacy we all know, the pharmacist's role in the healthcare landscape is expanding as well. Just recently in Australia there has been a big push for pharmacists to become an integrated part of the general practice setting. It is likely that you will see pharmacists appearing in other unique areas of practice in the future as other opportunities for integration that can utilise the unique skills of a pharmacist are explored and realised.

Your local pharmacy remains your health destination and your pharmacist is your local health professional specialising in health checks and other professional services. Some pharmacies also offer consumer-orientated health information through the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia's Self Care health information.

For the nearest Self Care pharmacy location phone the Pharmaceutical Society of Australia on 1300 369 772, or go to www.psa.org.au/selfcare, then click 'Find a *Self Care pharmacy* near you'.