

Pharmacy

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1. Pharmacy - What does the Community Pharmacy provide

Hello, my name is Charlene. I am mother of four neurodiverse children and I'm going to be speaking with Simon today about pharmacies. Hi, I'm Simon. I own and work at Hill Morton Pharmacy. I've been a community pharmacist for a bit over 30 years and I've owned Hill Morton for 15. I hope what you listen to is useful. To start with, coming to the pharmacist, is there anything in particular that I could come to you for instead of going to the doctor and waiting? Do you see a lot of people for different things? What a broad question. The short answer is yes. Now, I think the trick in the pharmacy setting is to know where our role stops.

So we're happy to talk, discuss, advise, but I think knowing where our role stops is just as important as being able to help in the first instance. So until we know what the situation is, it's a pretty hard one to answer. But the short answer is yes, do come. We're open, we're free, and we're accessible. Are you able to dispense antibiotics for an infected fingernail or is that something that must go through the doctor? At the moment, it must go through the doctor. Antibiotics broadly are all prescription only, the exception being we can help with an eye infection, a conjunctivitis, but there are certain criteria.

It's not just a case of can I have it? Yes, you can. There are criteria to meet, questions to ask, and forms to fill out from our side of things. There's a trial going on on the eastern side of town where pharmacies are able to help with minor skin conditions and skin infections, and that's quite exciting. Very much so. I find going to the doctor for something little, like a skin infection of some description, can be quite an ordeal, getting an appointment and things, so it would be helpful to be able to just come and see you. Look, honestly, it's the small things that go bad fast. An example I'll give you is hairdressers where they get a tiny bit of hair down the ankle, and they say, what are we doing with that?

Often it needs oral antibiotics. It just goes bad in a hurry. The trick from our side of things is convincing you that's the case. Okay. What about wound treatment? If I was to have a wound, maybe it was stitched up and bandaged up, but I needed regular dressing changes, is that something I could come to the pharmacist for? Again, that's a yes or no answer. It's a really good question. We have ranges of wound care, and as interns and young pharmacists, we're trained in wound care. But the range we have isn't the same as a hospital

with GPs. We can help with first aid, and in certain circumstances, we can help with wound care, but I won't pretend to say that we've got the whole range.

We just can't stock it. Sure. But again, it's a case of what's our advice? We can help, or we pass you on. Again, that's the trick, knowing when to pass you on. Is blood tests something that you offer? We don't do blood tests, but we often get requests from the public for where they can go and get them. So we'll often help navigate that, it's one of the things we help with, and we've even from time to time had to book tests for them if they're not computer literate. But we're happy to help. If we don't know the question, we can't give the answer. Sure. And over COVID, there was lots of vaccination stations, but the pharmacies really stood out as being the go-to place for tests and everything like that.

Oh my word. Oh my word. So are you still doing the vaccinations, the COVID vaccines and flu vaccines? Is there anything else that you do as far as vaccinations go? What a broad question. Yes, the COVID times, pharmacies, I think the catch word was nimble. We changed and we altered how we worked and why we worked and the hours we worked. And very quickly we became the centre for collecting of rat tests, for doing tests for people who were travelling for the COVID vaccinations. Flu vaccines, you know, when pharmacists were first given vaccination status, we could only do the non-funded flu vaccines.

And that's evolved so fast, even in the space of 10 years, that we're now doing flu and COVID would be the two biggest ones. But there's the measles, shingles, boost tricks for pregnant women. There's a lot more to the vaccinating arsenal than there was. Pharmacy has evolved very, very quickly, and I believe is supplying, if not half, maybe even over half the vaccinations in the country. Oh, that's incredible. And do you need to make an appointment for the vaccines, or is it sort of drop in and see if anyone's through? Yes and yes. That is, it's easy for us. If you make a booking, we can see how our day looks, and when staff are on, maybe avoiding lunches or morning tea breaks.

But by the same token, we'll take walk-ins. You know, we want to make getting vaccinated as easy as possible, as accommodating as possible, and we'll take both. Yeah. And you were saying that you do the measles vaccines, and once you're pregnant, do you do children as well, or is that just left for the GPs? Good question. There's a change in legislation just recently that has allowed the childhood vaccination programme to be done through pharmacies, but it's not all pharmacies will be doing it. It requires extra training on top of the standard vaccination training, requires different facilities within the pharmacy.

So while we can, not all pharmacies will be able to, so we'll pay the check first. Okay.

2. Pharmacy – The Community Pharmacy team – roles

So what sort of roles are there in the pharmacy? There must be lots of different parts to it. Good question. So I'll speak to community pharmacy because that's been my whole career. So I've been a pharmacist for a bit over 30 years and have owned Hill & Wharton Pharmacy for 15 years now. In the pharmacy, you'll have the pharmacist. You'll have a dispensary technician who has a qualification and they can produce labels, count and pour, but everything they do has to be checked by the qualified pharmacist before it goes out. There's an intern pharmacist who's done their four-year university degree.

Then they do a one-year internship to then qualify. Then you've got the retail staff and at a larger pharmacy, you may have general shop staff, you may have cosmetic staff, you may have senior buyers. So there's quite a range of roles within the pharmacy, depending on the size, depending on the style. Sure. So you mentioned that you're a community pharmacy. What is different about a community pharmacy compared to a pharmacy in the mall? Okay, so a community pharmacy is a pretty broad term for anything that's not in the hospital, say. So a community pharmacy could be a strip shop in the neighbourhood.

It could be next to a medical centre. It could be in a mall. We would class all those as community pharmacies. And they're all different. They all have slightly different bents as far as their dispensing, retail, mix, the type of products they hold. But they are generally community pharmacy. As the owner of a pharmacy, I own all the stock in the pharmacy and I ask the health department for reimbursement. In the hospital pharmacy, the hospital owns the stock and the staff there are there as employees as opposed to owners.

3. Pharmacy – Pharmacy working with General Practice

Do you ever connect with GPs in relation to a patient if they were needing ongoing care that you could give them through the GP? Is that something you would do? The short answer is yes. We have a good, strong relationship with the doctors, particularly next door to us but around town as well, and I think all pharmacies will work to the best interest of their patients. Now, that could show in many different ways, but examples might be you normally get five things on a prescription, there's only four this time, has one been missed? We call the doctor. Is one thing being prescribed at 30-day supply and the others at 90-day supply? We call the doctor. We have a couple of patients who are high needs and we organise their prescriptions on a routine basis because it's far easier for us than for

them. Sure. So there's Sure. The short answer is yes, and I think every pharmacy will be in that boat where they help navigate the trips and tricks for the best interest of the patient.

4. Pharmacy - The different medicines and who can provide these

So are there different categories of medication in the pharmacy? Are there some that are pharmacy only, pharmacist only? Good question. Yes, so we have prescription only, and as the name suggests, you need a prescription for those. There's pharmacist only, so you need to have a chat with me and we'll make sure that's the right thing for you, and there'll be a bit of form filling out. What's interesting is a check on me, not a check on you, but it has to be done. There's pharmacy only, so you can only buy that in the pharmacy, but you can buy it without restriction, and then there's what's called general sale medicines, and those general sale medicines can be sold in the pharmacy, but that's where you'll also see them in the health aisle of the supermarket, for example.

Sure, like Panadol. Correct, yeah. There'll be limits in sizes. Right. So the pharmacy only sizes might be a different size to what's in the supermarket, so you might get 20 in the supermarket, but might be able to buy 100 with us, as an example, but those are different categories. Okay, so you're talking about pharmacist only medication. Can you elaborate on what some of those are? Absolutely. So, step one, remember, this is the category where we have to be involved, and it's a question and answer, maybe a form filling out, maybe criteria to be met, but examples include products for vaginal thrush for women, UTI, so urinary tract infections, anti-inflammatories, strong anti-inflammatories for, say, back pain, erectile dysfunction medicines for men.

Again, always with the proviso, it's not the case of, I want, it's what can you recommend, because there's a responsibility on the pharmacist, and extra training for us to be able to sell these products. So, yes, as long as you understand that it's, you know, what can I have, as opposed to, can I have. And always, if in doubt, ask your pharmacist. With the likes of The Morning After pill, The Morning After pill, the morning after pill, is that something that you are able to dispense? Yes, yes. So, there's broadly three avenues. GP, of course. Pharmacist, as a pharmacist, only medicine, and family planning.

There's no prescription charge at the pharmacy in the current environment. There may be a consultation charge, but it's available, and again, question and answer, form to fill out, and, you know, there's questions about, you know, timing of the last period, when the intercourse occurred. So, it's a case of, you know, can I have, you know, a chat with the pharmacist about that, please?

5. Pharmacy - Access to a quiet space for a discussion

something that interests me as well as when I come into the pharmacy and I go up to the counter and I'm asking for something that's maybe something I don't want to broadcast to everybody is there anywhere that do you have a little room or something or that I can discuss with you so that there aren't people listening absolutely and privacy is really important and I think particularly with the evolution of the pharmacist as a vaccinating space more and more pharmacies have consultation rooms and I think the way to go is just come in and be upfront say I've got something I'd like to discuss in private can we have a quiet corner please and any pharmacist will be happy to go take you out of flapping ears way and have a quiet chat often you have the ability to be able to say look can I speak to a male pharmacist or a female pharmacist if you have a preference and no offence will be taken but you're absolutely within your right to ask for a quiet space that's good to know

6. Pharmacy - Help with navigating the health system

For a lot of families, it's very difficult navigating the health system, especially with their kids. Is the pharmacy somewhere where we can go and get some advice? What sort of can you offer? I think it's a really good first port of call. Look, our knowledge base is broad, and I think the part of the skill of being a pharmacist is to know when you can't help and direct people to someone who can. So a couple of examples might be raising toothache that they want pain relief for, but we suggest they go and see a dentist, or a throbbing ingrown toenail, go and see a podiatrist. I've taken people by the hand next door to the GP and said, this person needs to be seen today. Please find a gap. We've got some pharmacies who've got such a good relationship with their medical centre, they can see the appointment list of the doctors in the pharmacy. And I know a couple of friends who can say, would you like an appointment? I'll book you one now. Which is fantastic. I think the key is pharmacy is accessible, we're free, and we're happy to give advice.

7. Pharmacy - Key messages

So key messages I've picked up from just chatting to you today are I wasn't aware that there were so many pharmacist-only medications I could come to you for instead of going to my doctor. Also being able to come and chat to a pharmacist about anything and being able to be pointed in the right direction instead of jumping on Google all the time. So thanks so much for your time. I really

appreciate you sharing all this with me and hope that it will help some other families as well. Thank you so much for having me. I'm delighted to be here. I hope I've represented pharmacy well. But I think the messages for your audience are that we're open, we're accessible, we're free and we're happy to give advice.