

PHARMACY *care*

NEWS

A NEWSLETTER DEDICATED TO SENIORS

Welcome to the first issue of the year for our newsletter. As always, I hope you find it interesting and useful.

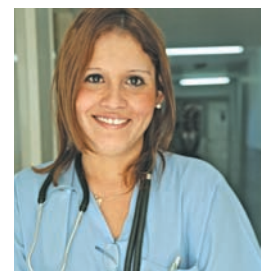
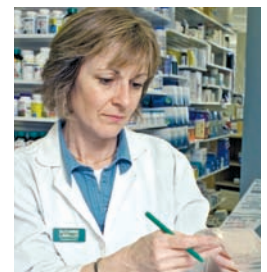
In this issue we take time to look at diabetes and seniors. It is a complicated disease affecting two million Canadians. Here at Medical Pharmacies we believe that the best way to manage diabetes is with knowledge. In this issue I am pleased to introduce you to two of our pharmacists with advanced expertise in diabetes care. Gabrielle and Joanne will give you insight into advances in care as well as how Medical Pharmacies is working to help keep seniors with diabetes as healthy as possible. You'll also find practical tips for seniors caring for themselves. And finally we take a moment to share with you a story of how some of our newest technology is being used in a long term care home to enhance care for the residents there.

Steve Pearson

Steve Pearson, R.Ph., B.Sc.Pharm.
Senior Vice-President



People - Our reason for caring



**MEDICAL
PHARMACIES**

On the Front Lines in Diabetes Care

Leonard Thompson, a 14 year-old boy, had no idea he'd make history. Back in 1922 diabetics like Leonard usually lived for only another four to six years before wasting away or dying from complications. But Leonard was lucky enough to be the first patient in the world to receive a new treatment called insulin. Since then this discovery has changed the lives of people with diabetes all over the world.

But the battle against diabetes is hardly over. Insulin and other medications are not cures. Luckily for the two million Canadians with this disease, treatment hasn't stood still. It's a different world now with doctors, pharmacists, nurses, dieticians and diabetes educators working together to help people manage their diabetes.

But what is diabetes? It's a lack of a hormone called insulin which we need to help us make use of the sugar in the food we eat – the fuel for our bodies. People with Type I diabetes do not produce enough (or any) insulin while those with Type II diabetes find their bodies have increased resistance or reduced sensitivity



Joanne Polkiewicz
R.Ph., B.S.P., CGP, CRE



Gabrielle Ho
R.Ph., B.Sc.Ph., CDE, CGP

to their own insulin. It's a serious disease that is on the rise, especially among seniors.

This is why the pharmacists at Medical

Pharmacies are taking it very seriously. Many of our pharmacists are on the front line in the battle against diabetes – in long term care as well as retirement homes. People like Gabrielle Ho and Joanne Polkiewicz. Gabrielle's parents and two uncles have the

disease, as does Joanne's father. As Gabrielle says, diabetes is "a very relevant condition" for them both. The pair chose to specialize in diabetes care.

"Many problems can be solved by personal visits"

You'll find Gabrielle and Joanne in retirement and long term care homes helping residents and caregivers understand insulin and a range of other drugs for diabetes. They also work to help people learn how food choices affect their blood sugar levels. "Part of my job is to inform and educate people," Gabrielle says. Both Joanne and Gabrielle believe that talking honestly with residents about eating habits and food preferences goes a long way to improving diabetes management. Medication reviews help too, spotting possible drug interactions and other issues. "Many problems can be solved by personal visits" with residents or with the whole care team (doctors, nurses and care aides), Gabrielle believes.

The rewards of good diabetes management are many. “More normal blood sugar levels means wounds heal faster, residents have more energy and feel less fatigued,” Joanne notes. People with well-managed diabetes have a better quality of life.

Diabetes is a complex disease involving blood sugar levels, blood pressure, and cholesterol as well as diet and lifestyle choices. Knowledge is a good thing; as Gabrielle says “it’s never too late to start to pay attention to our health.”

Managing diabetes – tools for seniors

For seniors, managing diabetes can sometimes be hard work. It can seem like a tightrope act – balancing food, medications and activity to keep blood sugars as normal as possible. Here are some helpful tips for managing your diabetes.

Know your numbers. Effective diabetes management starts with understanding what your blood sugars are at different times during the day. Even if you can’t make testing painless you can simplify other aspects. Choose a meter that has large numbers or even a backlit display so it’s easy to read. If you find handling the test strips difficult, consider getting a meter that stores the strips internally in a drum. Your pharmacist can help you choose a meter that suits you best. Testing regularly is a good habit to get into; the right meter will help.



into account when you are taking medications like insulin. Talk to your health care team about what sorts of food you like and when you eat them. Be open and honest with them; they can build your favourite foods into your diabetes management plan.

Watch your feet. We take our feet for granted, ignoring them as long as they get us around. But people with diabetes have to pay close attention to their feet to keep them healthy. Happy feet are clean, wound-free and moisturized. Get into the habit of checking your feet for cuts, blisters

or other wounds. And check inside your shoes before you put them on every time. Treat injuries immediately. Keeping your feet clean and your

nails properly trimmed can prevent injuries. So can moisturizing your feet, especially in winter.

Know your food. It’s a sad fact that most of the tasty foods we like have calories and carbohydrates. This doesn’t mean you can’t eat them, just that you need to take them

The world of diabetes management is complicated. Talk to your doctor and pharmacist for help in navigating your way to good habits.

Fueling Innovation

Technology is the hidden side of pharmacy. Most people just see the faces of our clinical consultant pharmacists who help manage their care, or hear the voices of our pharmacists in the dispensary. But behind them is a complicated technological world that makes Medical Pharmacies one of the most innovative companies working in seniors care today.

Recently, long term care home operator, Extendicare, showcased Medical Pharmacies' Electronic Medication Administration system at its IT Centre of Innovation in Brampton. This system – “very innovative technology,” as Mike Boyle, Extendicare’s Director of IT, calls it, is designed to save time and enable nurses to focus more on hands-on care by making the administration of medications paperless. It’s one of many innovations Medical Pharmacies has brought to long term care.

Automated Bill Payment

As a senior or family member of someone in a long term care or retirement home you’ve got a lot to manage. That’s why we encourage residents or their caregivers to use pre-authorized bank withdrawals to pay your pharmacy statement. It’s simpler, easier and one less thing to worry about. Call Central Billing at 416-213-1427 or 1-888-841-4049.



Med-eLink – an innovative advancement giving nurses more time with residents.

Medical Pharmacies is dedicated to supporting the safety, well-being and quality of life of the residents in each home we service. We have been providing pharmacy care to communities across Ontario for 50 years.



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