

PHARMACISTS

A Powerful Partner, Close to Home

Written By: Brett Leclaire

Living with Parkinson disease means managing a lot of moving parts like medications, symptoms, side effects, and appointments. It can be overwhelming, and you may feel like you're floating out at sea on your own while you wait till your next visit with your doctor or Neurologist – especially when it comes to your medication(s). The good news is you likely have a great ally and member of your healthcare team not too far from your house! One of the most accessible and knowledgeable professionals when it comes to medication and side effects might be someone you haven't fully tapped into yet – Your Pharmacist!! A Pharmacist is an incredible resource when it comes to understanding medication, potential side effects, possible interactions, and even help understanding timing and dosages. They truly are far more than

just someone who fills prescriptions, your pharmacist can be a powerful partner in managing Parkinson's day-to-day.

So, what, exactly, is a pharmacist? A pharmacist is a registered, licensed healthcare professional who specializes in all things medication. They can help you understand how medications work, how to use them safely, and how they interact with other medications you might be taking; while offering advice, support, and services to manage your health more effectively.

They can help ensure Parkinson's medications (like levodopa) are taken at the right times to avoid "off" periods and can flag dangerous interactions with other drugs, including antidepressants or over-the-



counter remedies that might seem harmless. For patients managing common symptoms of fatigue, tremors, or cognitive fog, Pharmacists offer practical tools such as blister packs, medication synchronization, or refill reminders to make sticking to our regimen easier.

From prescriptions to over-the-counter options, Pharmacists are also a great help for treating other Parkinson's symptoms that might not be covered by traditional Parkinson's medications. Issues such as constipation, heartburn, dry eyes, sleep problems, or blood pressure fluctuations are all things that a pharmacist can make recommendations for. They can help you identify safe supplements or non-prescription

treatments that will not interfere with one's Parkinson medications. Along with this Pharmacists can sometimes help identify whether a new symptom is a side effect of medication or part of disease progression, and they can suggest practical solutions or recommend when to follow up with your doctor. Their broad knowledge of both prescription and over the counter therapies makes them a valuable first stop for managing these everyday but often disruptive symptoms.

In many parts of Canada, Pharmacists can go even further with the authority to prescribe medications for minor ailments, renew certain prescriptions, and administer vaccines that can save you valuable time and

energy. Perhaps most importantly, Pharmacists are among the most accessible health professionals in the country. No appointment is needed, and many are available on evenings or weekends ready to provide timely care when a neurologist or family doctor might be harder to reach.

For people with Parkinsons and care-partners, building a relationship with your pharmacist can provide not only better symptom control and fewer complications, but also peace of mind and a more responsive, connected circle of care. ■

The image is a promotional graphic for Qualicare Home Care. On the left, the Qualicare logo is displayed in blue, featuring a red heart inside a circle. Below the logo, the text 'Home Care' is written in a smaller blue font. Further down, the phrase 'Home Care for Every Need' is written in a larger, bold blue font. At the bottom left, the phone number '587-418-0143' and the website 'qualicare.com' are listed in blue. On the right side of the graphic is a photograph of a smiling elderly woman with short grey hair, wearing a light pink cardigan over a white collared shirt. A woman with brown hair, wearing a grey sweater over a white collared shirt, is standing behind her, smiling and hugging her from the side. The background of the photo is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting with greenery visible through a window.

Qualicare®
Home Care

**Home Care
for
Every Need**

587-418-0143
qualicare.com