

# We're ready and waiting to help you

Pharmacists have lots of skills, expertise and knowledge to help solve your health problems

Would you think of turning to your local pharmacist for help if you had a health concern? According to a recent survey by Boots, just one in three of us would.

But up and down the country - on high streets, inside supermarkets and in the heart of nearly every neighbourhood - pharmacists are ready and waiting to help you. Sometimes open in the evenings and weekends, pharmacies are an excellent first port of call if you want to chat to a qualified healthcare profes-

sional. Today, community pharmacies are much more than a place to go simply to pick up your prescription medicine.

And here, Boots pharmacist Isabel Waterworth tells us about some of the services she offers that help make a difference to her customers' lives.

From supporting customers struggling to cope with long-term health conditions to assisting customers getting ready for exotic holidays, many people would be surprised to find out how Boots pharmacists can help.

## How we ease the worry

ISABEL WATERWORTH is a pharmacist at the Boots store in Marton, Blackpool.



"When I was working at the Thornton-Cleveleys store, a gentleman came in who had just been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. His doctor had given him a prescription for medication and recommended he find out as much as possible about

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## Pharmacist facts

Pharmacists can help people with asthma manage their condition. Not sure you're using your inhaler correctly?



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"When I was working at the Thornton-Cleveleys store, a gentleman came in who had just been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. His doctor had given him a prescription for medication and recommended he find out as much as possible about Parkinson's. But as he still didn't really know what Parkinson's was and what the medication actually did, he found it all quite daunting and worrying.

"We sat in the private consultation room and I listened to him for a bit, then I explained Parkinson's to him, how the disease worked, how the medication would help with his symptoms and what to expect from it. This gentleman hadn't had any regular medication before and lived quite a distance from the surgery, so to remove some of the worry I organised a repeat prescription service for him so he could just go to the Boots store once a month to collect his medicine.

"I think he particularly appreciated this - he wasn't lonely but appreciated seeing a friendly face on a regular basis, and someone to talk to about his disease. At the end of that initial consultation I gave him some print-outs from the internet that he could take home and read at his leisure. Every month he would come in and we'd talk about how he was getting on and I'd answer any questions he had.

"He came back several times about other problems - for example he had a minor issue with one of his eyes - because he knew us and could trust us and we could help without the formality of a doctor's appointment.

"The repeat prescription ordering system at Boots is one of a number of different services we offer to help our customers. When you pick up your medication from us, we ask what you will need in a month's time, fill in the repeat prescription slips we have in store and arrange it directly with your GP. Removing just that little bit of organisational burden is a huge help to many people and we either arrange a date for them to pick up their medication or send customers a text. Upon collection we always check if everything is still required, too.

"We also offer a New Medicines Service, which is an NHS service available in England. If you've been given a new prescription for certain medicines we will talk you through it at the outset to answer any questions you may have and explain what you should expect.

"Then, so you don't need to come back into the store, we will call in a week's time and ask how you're getting on including whether you're having problems or experiencing side effects. The aim is to improve the way patients take their medicines and to help them navigate through any initial problems. Sometimes patients struggle to take their medicines as prescribed in the first few weeks so we follow the initial phone call up a fortnight later to check how everything is going. As part of an NHS service in place in pharmacies across England and Wales, we also do a Medicines Use Review specifically for people who have two or more regular items on prescription or those who take certain types of medicine. They can have an annual consultation with a pharmacist to go through their medication, to check whether they're taking it properly, suffering any side effects, whether they're aware of why they are taking it and to answer any questions about the medication the patient may have.

If you take blood pressure tablets, for instance, you're more likely to feel side effects from the medication than any tangible benefits, because low or high blood pressure might not make you feel ill, but continuing to take medication is important to help prevent more serious health issues.

"In certain Boots stores we also offer flu jabs\*\* and travel vaccinations and some of our stores have private consultation rooms which we use for many different reasons. For instance, we can offer an emergency contraception service in certain stores where this has been locally commissioned.

"At my store, some pharmacists are also trained to offer a service to assist with male baldness and erectile dysfunction.

"You can find the nearest store that offers you these services by searching online."

**If you take medication, we can check you know how to use it properly**

**ISABEL WATERWORTH**  
BOOTS PHARMACIST

ask your local pharmacist

**Bristol Post**



**1** Are you or a loved one worried about how your cancer treatment might affect you? Many Boots pharmacies now have a Boots Macmillan Information Pharmacist who is specially trained to support you if you are affected by cancer.



**3** From help with understanding travel vaccinations you might need to

help stopping smoking, Boots pharmacies have a wide range of in store services. If you have a health concern, visit your local pharmacist for advice and information. If they cannot personally help you, pharmacists will be able to guide you in the right direction. More often than not, you can simply turn up. But for those not wanting to risk a wasted trip, did you know you can book appointments for many in store services in advance?

# Helping you cope with your problems

of skills, edge to help

Today, community pharmacies are much more than a place to go simply to pick up your prescription medicine. And here, Boots pharmacist el Waterworth tells us about how she offers help to her customers. She offers help to make a difference to her customers' lives. From supporting customers with long-term conditions to assisting customers getting ready for exotic holidays, many people would be surprised to find out how Boots pharmacists can help.

## Worry

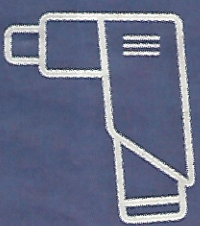
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**2** Pharmacists can help people with asthma manage their condition. Not sure you're using your inhaler correctly? Drop in to your nearest Boots and a pharmacist can show you the correct technique.



**4** For women wanting to access the morning after pill, your local Boots pharmacist is there to help. Boots pharmacists can have a private conversation with you to help you understand your options.

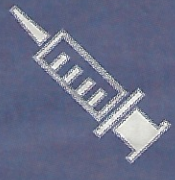


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**5** Visiting your local doctors' surgery for your winter flu jab sometimes may not be very convenient. Did you know many pharmacists in England and Wales are trained to give you the NHS flu jab\*\* (subject to eligibility), so you can choose a store location that fits in best with your plans. For those not eligible under the NHS scheme, you can pay a fee for the vaccination.



\* Services subject to eligibility criteria, pharmacist and stock availability. Charges apply. \*\* NHS Service is not available in Scotland.