

Pharmacist in Action: Managing Hypertension



World Hypertension Day 2019 is May 17. The theme for this year is *Know Your Numbers* with a goal of increasing high blood pressure awareness in all populations around the world.

Stephanie Burden is a community pharmacist who is making a difference in hypertension care. Stephanie uses a BP Tru monitor in her daily practice to educate her patients on the importance of knowing their numbers, and what those numbers mean. She also assesses the efficacy of patients' antihypertensive therapy, in collaboration with local physicians, and recommends changes to improve current medications.

Stephanie is a 2009 graduate from Memorial University's School of Pharmacy, and in 2016 she built and opened Complete Care Pharmsave in Rocky Harbour, NL. Her spacious and modern dispensary was designed with the pharmacists' clinical role in mind, and her two private clinic rooms allow for embracing and expansion of pharmacist professional services. Blood pressure measurements and consultations are offered in a private and comfortable clinic room with BP Tru averaging to minimize white coat hypertension.

Blood pressure management is such a basic but impactful role for pharmacists to embrace. Educating patients on how medication and lifestyle changes help improve their blood pressure is rewarding and collaborating with local physicians to assess and recommend certainly has had a positive impact on her career and future goals.

Stephanie is an advocate for *knowing your numbers*, and often asks patients who are just in for routine refills, "When was the last time you checked your blood pressure?" Patients are so used to having their blood pressure reviewed that several come in on a monthly basis, and even more often if they're feeling unwell.

Pharmacists are uniquely positioned to see the whole picture – it is common to find patients who may actually be hypotensive after they've made positive lifestyle changes or are now using blister packs and are able to take all of their medications properly.

"I believe that blood pressure assessment is an essential service that allows pharmacists to educate patients, collaborate with physicians, and move the profession forward in our vision of interprofessional chronic disease management." Stephanie Burden