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## Local pharmacist compounds medication

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By [Jennifer Westendorp](#)

Compounding medications is something Neveen Hanna, R.Ph.,B.Sc.PhM, the pharmacist and manager at Pharmasave in Kemptville, knows all about.

"I can compound any type of medication in dosage form that is not commercially available," said Hanna. "For example, anyone who has difficulty swallowing a tablet, I can make their medication into a liquid."

Hanna said that by using a unique machine, known as a mill, she can make topical medication in varying strengths depending upon need. "I put the cream inside the machine and it reduces the particle sizes, which then can absorb into the skin better," said Hanna. "It makes the medicine more effective."

Hanna said the mill has other benefits too, such as altering the form a medication takes, which in turn better suits the needs of an individual.

"Sometimes medications are hard on the liver or kidneys, so by turning it into a topical cream that can be applied directly to the skin, you bypass those organs entirely," she said.

The local Pharmasave also has a capsule making machine, which allows Hanna to increase or decrease the strength of medications as needed by each patient.

The pharmacy works with one of the biggest compounding companies in the world, known as Professional Compounding Centers of America (PCCA).

"They have their own bases, to which we add medical ingredients to create personalized medications," said Hanna. "Only the PCCA members have access to these bases."

She said the pharmacy treats many patients for pain, including back and shoulder related, which is done most effectively using a topical cream made from one of the PCCA bases called Lipoderm.

"We add the active ingredients, in powder form, to the base and the medication is delivered directly to the skin," said Hanna. "There are no side effects, unlike medications that need to be ingested."

Darryl Austin, one of the owners of the Equinelle Pharmasave, said that by going through the skin, the medication bypasses the organs.

"It is much safer to use for people with weak kidneys or liver issues," said Austin. "It also prevents dependency issues with medications such as opiates."

Austin said Hanna can tweak the formula for pretty much anything and create something that is more likely to help each patient on an individual basis.

"She gets great results, which is the beauty of compounding," said Austin.

Saves long trips Hanna said some of her patients use to travel to downtown Ottawa in order to have their specific medication needs met, prior to Pharmasave opening its doors.

"We are the only pharmacy around that can do this," said Hanna.

Hanna said the ability to compound medications is extremely useful when dealing with hormone replacement therapy patients, who may need hormone levels in their medications adjusted regularly.

"Doctors prescribe different strengths and

that's what we do," said Hanna.

Hanna said she uses bioidentical hormones, which are very similar to naturally occurring hormones in the human body.

"The commercial conjugated estrogen comes from horse urine," said Austin.

Hanna also said she uses bioidentical hormones for thyroid treatment, which are more effective and have fewer side effects.

Austin said that Hanna is an amazing pharmacist and a true asset to the people of North Grenville.

"We are so lucky to have her here," said Austin. "If you have a question about anything (concerning medicine), you can ask Neveen and she probably knows. If not, she'll do some research and find out for you. She is just so passionate and committed to helping people." Austin said local doctors are really starting to put faith in her skills and knowledge.

"The doctors in town will call her up and ask questions about things," said Austin. "There's a doctor in Ottawa who calls her on a regular basis too. There are a lot of people starting to find out about her work."

Austin said Hanna also assists local veterinarians with medications for the animals.

Finds solutions Hanna said she works with patients who have tried 'everything' in the past and found nothing that works.

"They come to me and you can tell they don't think what I'm giving them is going to help, but then I offer to give them a free sample and they come back to get more because it did help," said Hanna.

She said one patient, who suffered from muscle aches in her upper arm, couldn't sleep very well due to the pain.

"She had tried everything imaginable. I gave her a sample of the topical pain medication I make here after talking to her doctor and she called me back a few days later and said it was the first time she was able to sleep in a long time."

Hanna said another patient had severe back

pain and had to sleep in a reclining chair.

"The medication she was taking didn't work," said Hanna. "After trying my cream, she called me and said she could finally sleep in her bed again."

Austin said the feedback he is getting from customers is extremely positive.

"The success stories are just unbelievable," said Austin. "Neeven is just so good at what she does. She works really hard to get it just right for people."

Hanna also works a lot with patients who have skin conditions.

"I had a patient who had bad dermatitis, which causes itchiness everywhere," said Hanna. "She was scratching everywhere and causing open sores, which would then get infected. I made a special cream for her from the Pracasil-plus base from PCCA, with many other ingredients. It cleared up her skin entirely and she was very relieved."

Austin said he's not saying the Equinelle Pharmasave is a miracle store or cure all, but rather that Hanna is capable of much more than people may be aware.

"She is so passionate and dedicated to her work," said Austin. "She continues trying where others have failed or given up. She never gives up on a patient. She just tries something new."

The Equinelle Pharmasave has a myriad of other beneficial services available, such as free local delivery, medication managers, sizing for compression hosiery and free diabetic assessments (A1C test). For a full list of their services, visit the store at 90 Royal Landing Gate in Kemptville or call (613)-215-0211.

Hanna was born and raised in Egypt, where she attended Alexandria University.

She moved to Canada with her husband 15 years ago and became a practicing pharmacist, following rigorous equivalency testing, shortly thereafter.

The Equinelle Pharmasave is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and closed Sunday.