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Got questions? Pharmacists have the answers

By Jenn Marshall The news Bulletin

Being a parent can be a daunting job, but new parents can have many of their questions answered by taking a trip to the nearest pharmacy.

Megan Maitland, a pharmacist at the Pharmasave on Bowen Road, said many people are not aware she can help them with over-the-counter products as well as prescriptions.

"Pharmacists are members of the health-care team and we are accessible and available to answer questions," she said. "It's a good choice for parents and grandparents."

Cassandra Kolot, a first-time mother with four-month-old baby Cadence, said she finds the advice of pharmacists very helpful. "I ask them about all sorts of vitamins and I usually talk to them about it before I give it to my baby," she said. "I find it's like talking to a doctor."

Maitland put together a list of products she would recommend parents keep in their baby bags, including baby oil, powder, wipes, the B.C. Health Guide handbook (free at any pharmacy), shampoo, petroleum jelly, and zinc oxide ointment. Parents can enter a draw to win the baby bag at the end of the week.

To become a pharmacist, one must go through five years of university, and Maitland said they are knowledgeable about medication and other products. She gets lots of parents coming in to ask questions. "Always try to pick up products that are fragrance free, it's better for their skin," she said.

"Diaper rash, teething questions, creams and moisturizers to use, we get a fair number of questions about that."

Maitland cautions new parents about being careful when cleaning their baby's ears and applying baby powder so the baby doesn't breathe it in.

"A lot of it is common sense, the baby's skin is sensitive, so you have to be careful," she said.

As a new grandmother and pharmacist for 27 years, Maitland feels she can also offer customers some advice based on personal experience.

"I feel I'm able to give them some first hand information."

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Pharmacist Megan Maitland shows off a baby bag full of products she recommends for new parents at Pharmasave on Bowen Road. She said pharmacists are great resources for parents and grandparents who have questions about products as well as medication.