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Andover pharmacy offers compounding

Increasingly popular, compounding allows pharmacists to create custom dosages or combinations, By Fran Hardy

Andover - The Medicine Shoppe is one of a kind in Sussex County. Although they have operated as a pharmacy since 1991, for the past 15 years the Medicine Shoppe has been the only place in Sussex County to get specially formulated medications prepared specifically for individuals or animals whose needs cannot be met by standard pharmaceuticals. This service is called compounding, and it has gained increasing popularity with doctors and patients in the last few years.

Colleen and Henry Giallanella are owners of the Medicine Shoppe and have recently moved their business across the street from its original location. They renovated a building that was formerly a Newton Trust Bank branch and will take advantage of what was a drive-up banking window to incorporate drive-up pharmacy service as part of their new store. The new location opened on May 11 at 4 Lenape Rd., near the intersection of Route 206.

According to the International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists, “A growing number of people have unique health needs that off-the-shelf prescription medicines cannot meet. For them, customized, compounded medications prescribed or ordered by licensed physicians or veterinarians and mixed safely by trained, licensed compounding pharmacists are the only way to better health.”
Henry is a certified Fellow of the International Academy of Compounding Pharmacists and also of the American College of Veterinary Pharmacists. The Medicine Shoppe is licensed and regulated by the New Jersey State Board of Pharmacy. The new store has a specially equipped “clean room” designed for delicate sterile formulations for things such as eye medications.

Sometimes physicians must prescribe alternative or compounded medications for their patients for a variety of reasons which include patient allergies to certain ingredients, the need for tailored dosages, or when a patient cannot ingest a medication in its commercially available form. This is when physicians rely on pharmacists, who are trained in chemical compatibilities and the compounding of pharmaceutical ingredients.

Until recently, compounded medications were not often discussed in the mainstream media and were known mostly to consumers of these products. On a January, 2009 episode of the Oprah Winfrey Show, actress and author Suzanne Sommers sang the praises of a medication only available through a compounding pharmacy. Suddenly, more patients began asking their doctors about compounded medications.

Compounding is also becoming more common in the treatment of animals. The veterinary community is looking to compounding pharmacies to create different flavors, dosages, potency levels, or means of administering medications for their animals. For example, the Medicine Shoppe creates a cream form of a medication for cats that can be rubbed on the inside of the cat’s ear, which is generally much easier than forcing the cat to ingest a liquid or tablet.

The Medicine Shoppe is a full service pharmacy and carries medical equipment and over the counter medications as well. However, it does not carry non-medical products, such as food, cosmetics, or gift items that might be found in other drug stores. The Medicine Shoppe is open Monday through Friday from 9:30 am until 6:30 p.m. and Saturday from 9:20 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. The store is closed on Sunday. The phone number is 973-786-5300.