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## Vitality Integrative Medicine is not your ordinary pharmacy practice

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*No one who visits Tara Maltman-just is just a number. "Mine is a one-on-one practice model that enables me to treat my patients with the integrity, compassion, personalized and comprehensive care that I believe they deserve," says the Winnipeg-based pharmacist and founding clinician at Vitality Integrative Medicine.*

By Jack Kohane

Photography by David Lipnowski

"Patients know their own bodies best, and in working closely with them, we can uncover their unique biochemical background and provide them with personalized strategies for success."

Her approach provides in-depth health consultations, combining integrative medicine and therapeutic planning tailored to each patient's needs. "It's designed to help patients live better, more balanced lives,"

explains Maltman-Just. Her ground-breaking collaborative care model zeroes in on treating the whole person, not the disease, putting her on the cutting edge of community-based, pharmacist-driven clinical practice.

At Vitality Integrative Medicine, Maltman-Just counsels on a range of health issues, which has attracted patients to her practice from across Canada, and she's even fielded requests from the US and other countries. She collaborates closely with many healthcare professionals and receives referrals from physicians across the country.

"I have a unique purely clinical, non-dispensary, fee-for-service private practice," she points out. "Patients so value the advice of a pharmacist that they are willing to invest their personal funds in this comprehensive and personalized model of care. In many ways, I become their primary healthcare advocate, managing their care in close collaboration with other members of the healthcare team."

Maltman-Just employs a variety of functional tests to aid in understanding her patients' biochemical individuality, including thyroid and hormone testing, nutrient levels to identify drug-induced nutrient depletions, gastrointestinal function, as well as leading-edge genomic testing for anticipated drug responses.

An Advanced Fellow, Board-Certified Diplomate and licensed pharmacist since 2006 (University of Manitoba), Maltman-Just has continued her love of learning with a Masters degree in metabolic and nutritional medicine and a brain fitness certification through the College of Medicine at the University of South Florida.

A popular guest speaker at healthcare industry events, a regular contributor to professional publications, and oft quoted on local and national media, she's a staunch advocate for patient-first care. For her work, she has received the CPhA's prestigious Centennial Award and an Achievement in Lifelong Learning award from the MPhA.

"Pharmacists are brilliant," enthuses Maltman-Just as she details her STELLAR consulting program (see sidebar). "I believe they have a deep-seated perfectionism, an underlying conviction of wanting to be their best and do their best for others." She knows pharmacists want to take the time to be with people, to explain their medications, to monitor their outcomes, and she knows that patients value their pharmacist's expertise.

"What I find most intriguing is that it's often other pharmacists themselves who seem most astonished about this novel endeavour," she notes. "In light of the recent passing of the regulations, I hope to see more and more pharmacists taking on a patient-centred consultative role."

**Tips for STELLAR consulting pharmacy practice .**

1. **Start** small – but start! *You don't need to wait for conditions to be perfect.*
2. **Time** – allot specific times for specific tasks. *Consults should be booked apart from dispensing shifts.*
3. **Envision** where you want to be in one year. *Dream big and boldly!*
4. **Listen** – to your patients' concerns. *Then identify how you can help them.*
5. **Learn** – from colleagues who are doing things well, or poorly. *This helps with #2.*
6. **Appreciate** – each small success.
7. **Remember** #3, #4 & #6 whenever you feel discouraged. And don't give up. After all, the darkest nights produce the brightest stars.



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