



Tips to Save You Money When Buying Prescription Drugs

How can I reduce the amount I pay for prescription drugs?

1. SHOP AROUND AND ASK FOR THE LOWEST PRICE

Call various pharmacies and ask each of them how much it would cost to purchase your prescription medication at that pharmacy. Don't be shy -- let them know you are comparison shopping. Write down the prices you are quoted by each pharmacy.

2. CONSIDER GENERICS

Ask your pharmacist or your health care provider if a generic drug can be prescribed instead of a brand-name drug. Generic drugs can save you a lot. The active ingredients in generic drugs are chemically identical to the active ingredients in brand name drugs. Generic drugs are available after a patent has expired on a brand name drug. When this occurs, other drug manufacturers can make and sell the drug. Generic drugs are not inferior to the brand name drug, but they often are much less expensive.

3. CONSIDER A THERAPEUTICALLY SIMILAR DRUG

Ask your pharmacist or health care provider if another drug would have the same therapeutic effect as a more expensive drug that has been prescribed for you. Sometimes your condition can be treated with another drug that is less expensive.

4. BEWARE OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS ADVERTISED TO CONSUMERS

Today many drug companies advertise prescription drugs directly to the public, recognizing that patients then will ask their health care pro-

viders to prescribe these drugs to them. These drugs are often new, brand name drugs, and expensive. Instead ask your pharmacist or health care provider if there are other drugs that could provide the same therapy for a lower cost.

5. DO NOT SKIP DOSES OR REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO TAKE TO MAKE MEDICATION LAST LONGER

Sometimes patients take less of the medication they are prescribed so that the drugs will last longer. This can include skipping doses or taking only one-half of a pill. However, reducing the amount of medication you are supposed to take can interfere with your drug therapy and actually harm you. Don't reduce your medication without talking to your pharmacist or health care provider.

6. LEARN IF YOU QUALIFY FOR SPECIAL, LOW COST DRUG PROGRAMS OPERATED BY GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES, DRUG COMPANIES, INSURANCE COMPANIES OR OTHERS

Do you have insurance that can cover a portion of your drug costs? Do you qualify for government or drug-company operated programs that can reduce drug expenses? The other side of this fact sheet contains a list of these programs.

7. PURCHASE A GREATER QUANTITY OF MEDICATION AT ONE TIME

Ask the pharmacy if you can reduce your total drug costs if you purchase drugs for a longer period of time; for example, purchase a 60-day supply instead of a 30-day supply. You may also be able to obtain a higher dose of a drug for about the same price and then split the medication. However, pill splitting is not possible for some medication (like sustained release drugs) or for some patients. Ask your pharmacist or health care provider first.

8. KEEP A LIST OF ALL MEDICATION YOU TAKE

Make a list of all prescription drugs you take and who prescribed them. Also include all nonprescription drugs you take (like aspirin, nasal spray, antacids, cold medication — drugs that do not require a prescription). Also, add to the list any herbal and food supplements you take. Be sure to share this list with your health care providers and pharmacist every time a prescription is written or filled for you. Don't be shy about sharing this list -- sometimes these drugs combine to cause harmful effects and this information could save your life or prevent duplicate drug therapy.



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For further information, please contact:

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Resources for Discounts on Prescription Drugs



DISCOUNT PROGRAMS	QUALIFICATIONS & GENERAL INFORMATION	PHARMACY PROGRAMS	QUALIFICATIONS & GENERAL INFORMATION
<p>MEDICARE DISCOUNT PROGRAM</p> <p>Available at any pharmacy currently providing Medi-Cal services, including chain and independent pharmacies.</p>	<p>Medicare recipients are eligible to obtain their medications at the Medi-Cal reimbursement rate. The discount ranges from 10% to 40% and depends on the type of medication dispensed – generic or the brand name. To qualify, you must be a Medicare enrollee, and must pay for the entire cost of the prescription in full without prescription drug coverage.</p>	<p>MED AMERICA PHARMACY</p> <p>1-209-475-1020 www.medamericapharmacy.com</p>	<p>For a membership fee of \$1 per month, individuals age 60 and older may save an average of 30% or more on medications. The pharmacy can also help you enroll in other prescription drug programs such as Together Rx and Pfizer Share Card.</p>
<p>PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY PROGRAMS</p>	<p>QUALIFICATIONS & GENERAL INFORMATION</p>	<p>DISCOUNT WAREHOUSES</p> <p>For details and prices check with your local discount warehouse.</p>	<p>It may be beneficial to check with your local discount warehouses for prescription drug prices. While they often do not participate in programs such as the Medicare discount, in order to remain competitive, prescription drug prices may be similar or lower than discount drug programs.</p>
<p>TOGETHER RX CARD</p> <p>1-800-865-7221 www.togetherrx.com</p>	<p>A joint discount card from prescription drug manufacturers Novartis, Abbott, Astra Zeneca, Aventis, Ortho-McNeil, Bristol-Myers-Squibb, GlaxoSmithKline, and Janssen pharmaceuticals. Discounts vary from 20% - 40%. To qualify you must be a Medicare enrollee, do not have prescription drug coverage, and your annual income cannot exceed \$28,000 for an individual or \$38,000 for couples. The program includes generic treatments produced by the above manufacturers.</p>	<p>INTERNET RESOURCES</p>	<p>GENERAL INFORMATION</p>
<p>ORANGE CARD</p> <p>GlaxoSmithKline 1-888-672-6436 www.gsk.com/index.htm</p>	<p>GlaxoSmithKline's medical savings program for seniors. Discounts average 30%. To qualify you must be a Medicare enrollee, do not have prescription drug coverage, and your annual income cannot exceed \$30,000 for an individual or \$40,000 for couples.</p>	<p>BENEFITS CHECKUP</p> <p>www.benefitscheckup.org</p>	<p>Assists seniors in locating programs that may pay for some of the costs associated with prescription drugs, health care, utilities, and other essential items or services.</p>
<p>PFIZER SHARE CARD</p> <p>1-800-717-6005 www.pfizerforliving.com/sharecard</p>	<p>A discount for Pfizer products. \$15 for each 30-day supply. To qualify you must be a Medicare enrollee, do not have prescription drug coverage, are not eligible for Medicaid or any other drug benefit program funded by the state, and your annual income cannot exceed \$18,000 for an individual or \$24,000 for couples.</p>	<p>FIRSTGOV FOR SENIORS</p> <p>www.seniors.gov/health/drugs.asp</p>	<p>Select "Prescription Drugs" link. Allows the user to research up to 5 pharmaceutical companies at a time to determine if the pharmaceutical company offers a prescription drug discount program. The user may also search up to 5 health conditions or diseases at a time to view programs for specific health conditions.</p>
<p>LILLY ANSWERS</p> <p>1-877-795-4559 www.lillyanswers.com</p>	<p>A discount for all Lilly products except controlled substances. To qualify you must be a senior or someone with a disability enrolled in Medicare, have no other prescription drug coverage through a health plan, insurance plan, or Medi-Cal, and your annual income cannot exceed \$18,000 for an individual or \$24,000 for couples.</p>	<p>CALIFORNIA HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION</p> <p>www.chcf.org</p>	<p>An online resource for independent research, analysis, and news on issues affecting health-care and financing. Select the "prescription drug" topic. This section offers a comparative guide for 10 different plans to assist individuals with their prescription drug costs.</p>
<p>PHARMACY PROGRAMS</p>	<p>QUALIFICATIONS & GENERAL INFORMATION</p>	<p>MEDICARE</p> <p>www.medicare.gov/prescription/home.asp</p>	<p>Allows a search by geographic area or zip code to access local program and plan information for prescription assistance. This site provides information on public and private programs that offer discounted or free medication, as well as Medicare Health plans that include prescription coverage.</p>
<p>LONGS DRUG STORES</p> <p>For details, contact your local Longs Drug Store or online at www.longs.com</p>	<p>Longs offers a Senior Advantage Program in which the pricing plan is identical to the Medicare Discount Program. The program also includes discounts on Longs products and services. There is no fee to join and you do not need to be a Medicare enrollee. Longs accepts most discount card plans.</p>	<p>PhRMA</p> <p>www.helpingpatients.org</p>	<p>This is a link to the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRma) Web site that helps individuals obtain information on manufacturer assistance programs only.</p>
<p>RITE AID</p> <p>www.riteaid.com</p>	<p>Rite Aid accepts most discount card plans such as the Pfizer card, Together Rx, and GlaxoSmithKline.</p>	<p>RX ASSIST</p> <p>www.rxassist.org</p>	<p>This Web site offers information on manufacturer and state programs. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation runs it.</p>
<p>WALGREENS</p> <p>www.walgreens.com</p>	<p>Walgreens has a Senior Dividends Discount Card. No fee for the card. Each time a prescription is purchased a dollar amount to 10% off the retail price is credited toward the card. The credit balance may be used for other purchases at Walgreens (except selected items where prohibited by law).</p>	<p>MEDICARE RIGHTS CENTER</p> <p>www.medicarerights.org</p>	<p>Select the "Discount Rx Resources" topic. It contains eligibility and benefit information on state prescription drug assistance programs, drug discount cards, and internet and mail order discount pharmacies. The Web site also provides additional information regarding the Medicare discount program.</p>