



Be a Wise Health Care Consumer

10 Ways to Reduce Your Prescription Drug Costs

Learn to become a smart shopper when it comes to drug therapy. You can cut costs by up to 90 percent by becoming an aggressive consumer. Use the same buying techniques that you routinely use when shopping for other goods and services.

You have a multitude of opportunities to obtain drug information. Check out pharmacy Web sites on the internet to obtain drug information and prices. As more individuals begin comparison shopping for drugs, more retailers will compete to win their business which will drive prices lower. Use the following smart-shopping tools to become a savvy consumer of prescription drugs.

- 1. Price Comparisons.** Drug prices are not uniform. You can save a considerable amount of money by comparison shopping. A recent study found that by comparison shopping consumers saved 10 percent on average on brand-name drugs and 81 percent on generics.
- 2. Drug Substitution.** When your doctor prescribes a drug, ask him or her if a cheaper alternative is available. They often are.
- 3. Bulk-Buying.** As you know from visiting your local Sam's Club or Costco, it's cheaper to buy in bulk. The same is true for drugs. Buying higher quantities at a time generally reduces the per dose cost of drugs. This is especially true for generics purchased by mail.
- 4. Mail-Order Pharmacies.** Mail-order and Internet pharmacies offer the best deals on prescription drugs for patients with chronic conditions.
- 5. Pill Splitting.** Many prescription drugs are available at increased dosages for the same or similar costs as smaller dosages. When physicians prescribe half as many higher-strength pills and have the patient split them to achieve the desired dosage, the cost of certain medications can be reduced as much as 50 percent.
- 6. Generic Medications.** Generic medications work as well as brand-name drugs and can cost 20 to 80 percent less.
- 7. Over-the-Counter Drugs (OTC).** As an alternative to prescription drugs consider OTC drugs. Ask your doctor if an OTC drug will do just as well. Today there are over 100,000 different OTC drugs and more than 600 of them were previously only available by prescription.
- 8. Pharmaceutical Company Assistance Programs/State Drug Assistance Programs.** Many drug companies and states offer drug assistance programs for the elderly, low-income patients and /or people with disabilities.
- 9. Medicare Drug Plans.** Seniors can combine smart shopping techniques with the Medicare drug plan. All the information you need is available at www.Medicare.gov.
- 10. Samples.** Drug companies give thousands of samples to doctors every year. Your doctor may be able to provide you with weeks worth of the medication at no charge. If you discover over time that the medication isn't working, you won't have wasted your money.