

\$ Stretch Your Dollar \$

Stretch Your Medication Dollar

Many Americans spend a large part of their monthly budget on prescription drugs. Below are several ways to try to save money on prescriptions.

- Over-the-counter - Buy over-the-counter medications. For example, consumers suffering from allergies can buy an over-the-counter medication like Claritin for about \$10 or spend more than \$50 for a prescription medication. The effectiveness is usually the same.
- Samples - Always talk to your doctor about the cost of your medications. Ask if a less expensive medication is available. Sometimes medical clinics have free samples available.
- Generics - Ask if the prescription is available in generic form. Many patients ask for brand names they recognize, but the generic versions are usually as effective and much less expensive. You can also buy the generic brands of multivitamins, ibuprofen (Motrin), acetaminophen (Tylenol) or aspirin, too.
- Dosage - Ask your physician if your medication can be split in half. Often times, a physician can prescribe 20 mg. tablets for the same cost as the 10 mg. needed by the patient. Patients can use a pill-splitter to get the correct dose of 10 mg.
- Shop around – Compare stores and/or pharmacies for the best prices.
- Assistance programs - Check on drug assistance programs from state agencies or pharmaceutical companies that manufacture your medicines. Check out www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-Medicare and ask for “Drug Savings.”

References:

Spending Smart on Medicine handout. University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service.

Saving Money on Prescription Drugs. U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2005/505_save.html

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