



Be a Wise Health Care Consumer

8 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. Use the following smart-shopping tools to become a savvy consumer of prescription drugs.

1. **Drug Substitution.** When your doctor prescribes a drug, ask him or her if a cheaper alternative is available. Often, there are cheaper alternatives.
2. **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.
3. **Generic Medications.** Generic medications work as well as brand-name drugs and can cost 20 to 80 percent less.
4. **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.

5. **Pharmaceutical Company Assistance Programs/State Drug Assistance Programs (NYS EPIC).** Many drug companies and states offer drug assistance programs for the elderly, low-income patients and /or people with disabilities.
6. **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.
7. **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.
8. **Use your Sidney Hillman Pharmacy Benefit.** Take advantage of your generous pharmacy benefits offered by Sidney Hillman: \$4 for generic drugs, \$10 for Tier II/Preferred Brand Drugs and \$20 for Tier II/Non-

Preferred Brand Drugs for a 30-day supply.