Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs Fact Sheets

A variety of fact sheets on the use of prescription drugs are available to the public. Link to the English and Spanish fact sheets below. The fact sheets are also available on the Consumer Reports Health Best Buy Drugs™ website.

- Drug Safety: Starting a New Drug
- Drug Safety: Reading Labels and Patient Information
- Drug Safety: Taking Drugs as Directed
- Drug Safety: Side Effects
- Drug Safety: Managing Multiple Drugs
- Generic Drugs: The Same Medicine for Less Money
- Your Health Plan’s Formulary: The List of Preferred Prescription Drugs
- Comparison Shopping: Getting the Best Price on Your Drugs
- Help Buying Drugs: Prescription Assistance Programs (PAPs)
- Choosing Drugs: Oral Diabetes Drugs
- Choosing a PPI to Treat Heartburn, Acid Reflux & GERD
- Choosing a Statin to Lower Cholesterol
Questions to Ask Your Doctor

Every time you get a new drug, make sure you understand why you are taking it and how to take it. Ask your doctor these 6 questions.

1. Why should I take this drug?
2. Is the drug safe for me?
3. How should I take it?
4. How long should I take it?
5. What are the side effects?
6. Is there a generic?

Why should I take this drug?

Make sure you understand what the drug is for. If you are not sure you want to take it, tell the doctor your concerns. Ask if there are other ways to help your condition, such as diet and exercise.

Is the drug safe for me?

Make sure your doctor knows:

- All the medicines you take. This includes over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, minerals, herbs, and dietary supplements.
- Any drug allergies or bad reactions that you have had to drugs.
- Any illnesses or conditions you have, such as diabetes or asthma.
- If you are nursing, pregnant, or planning to get pregnant.

How should I take it?

- How often do I take the new drug?
- Do I take it before, after, or with a meal?
- How much do I take each time?
- Do I need to stop taking any other drugs while I am taking this one?
- Is there any food I should avoid? Can I drink alcohol? Is there anything I should not do, such as drive?

Make sure you fully understand how to take your new drug before you leave the pharmacy. Don’t hesitate to ask the pharmacist if you have questions.
Drug Safety: Starting a New Drug

How long should I take the drug?
- How long do I need to take the drug? Do I need to finish the bottle? Can I stop when the symptoms are gone?
- How will I know if the drug is working?
- Will I need refills?

What are the side effects?
- What side effects might I have?
- When should I call the doctor about a side effect?

Is there a generic?
Tell your doctor if cost is a problem. Doctors often write prescriptions for brand-name drugs because the names are well known. But brand-name drugs cost more than generics. Ask if there is a generic that would work just as well.

Our advice:
When you start a new prescription, follow these safety tips:

Talk to your pharmacist.
When you pick up a new drug, make sure it is the drug your doctor prescribed. Review the directions and side effects. Ask if it is safe to take this drug with your other medicines.

Read and save the printed information that comes with the new drug.
It tells you:
- What the drug is for, how to use it, and how to store it.
- What to do if you miss a dose or take too much.
- Common and serious side effects.
- How to avoid drug interactions.
- When to call your doctor.

Start your new drug carefully.
- Pay attention to how you feel.
- Write down any side effects you have.
- Check back with your doctor if you are worried or you have any side effects.
- If your doctor wants you to have a lab test, make sure you get it. The lab test helps make sure that the drug is not causing a problem with your liver, kidneys, or anything else.
- Keep all your follow-up appointments with your doctor.
- Do not stop taking the drug before you are supposed to. If you think you want to stop it, talk to your doctor first.

Learn more about your drugs.
To learn more, visit these websites:
- www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs
- www.medlineplus.gov—click on Drugs & Supplements

This series is produced by Consumers Union and Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs, a public information project supported by grants from the Engelberg Foundation and the National Library of Medicine of the National Institutes of Health. These materials were also made possible by a grant from the State Attorney General Consumer and Prescriber Education Grant Program which is funded by the multi-state settlement of consumer fraud claims regarding the marketing of the prescription drug Neurontin. This brief should not be viewed as a substitute for a consultation with a medical or health professional. It is provided to enhance communication with your doctor, not replace it. Neither the National Library of Medicine nor the National Institutes of Health are responsible for the content or advice herein.
Why Read Labels and Information Sheets?
Your prescription drug comes in a bottle or a box with a label. You also receive written information about the drug from your pharmacy. Both the label and the information sheet tell you important safety information.

How to Read a Drug Label
Pharmacy labels have a lot of information. Here are the things to look for on a drug label. Each pharmacy may put the information in a different place. To learn more, visit our free website, www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs.
How to Read a Patient Information Sheet

Your pharmacy gives you printed safety information with each prescription. Here are the things to look for on a patient information sheet:

**Warning or Cautions**
- What you need to tell your doctor before you take the drug.
- The main risks of taking the drug.

**Uses**
- The health problems that the drug treats.
- How the drug works.

**How to Use**
- How to take the drug.
- How often to take it.
- Whether or not to chew it or take it with food.

**Side Effects**
- The most common side effects.
- When to tell your doctor about a side effect.
- Side effects that are rare but serious and what you should do if you have one.

**Precautions/Before Using this Medicine**
- The things you need to tell your doctor before you start the drug, like any other drugs and supplements you take and if you are pregnant or allergic to any drugs.

**Drug Interactions**
- The other drugs that you should avoid while you are taking this drug. These other drugs can make the new drug less effective or increase the side effects. This may include some over-the-counter drugs and supplements, too.

**Overdose**
- The phone number to call if you think you took too much of the drug.

**Notes/Additional Information**
- Other information about taking this drug.

**Missed Dose**
- What to do if you forget to take the drug.

**Storage**
- Where to keep the drug.
- How to throw away the drug safely.
About half of all adults do not take their prescription drugs as directed. If you skip doses, take less than the full dose, or stop too soon, the drug may not work properly. Taking too much of a drug can also harm you. Here are some common reasons why people do not take their drugs as directed:

- I felt better so I stopped taking it.
- I didn’t understand how to take it.
- I didn’t like the side effects.
- I couldn’t afford the medicine.
- I didn’t feel better. I thought it wasn’t working so I stopped taking it.
- I cut the pill in half to save money.

Our advice:

Ask your doctor how the drug will help you. Tell your doctor if you do not want to take it.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist how to take the new drug.
- How much should I take?
- When should I take it?
- What should I do if I forget to take a dose?
- How long should I take it, even if I feel better?
- When will the drug start working and how will I know if it is working?
- What are the possible side effects and what should I do if I have one?

Tell your doctor if cost is a problem. Millions of people do not take their drugs as directed because they cannot afford them. Tell your doctor if you cannot afford a drug.
- Ask if there is a generic drug that costs less.
- If you have Medicare, ask about the Extra Help program. Call 1-800-MEDICARE.

Your doctor prescribes a drug to help you cure or manage a health problem. Even if you feel better, do not stop taking the drug until your doctor says you can. If you are concerned about the cost, ask about a generic drug.
**Drug Safety: Taking Drugs as Directed**

**Tell your doctor if you are concerned about side effects.**
Many people are afraid of side effects from drugs. Ask your doctor which side effects are serious. Call your doctor if you are worried about or think you are having a side effect.

**Follow special directions.**
- Some drugs should be taken with food. Other drugs should be taken alone.
- If it is hard to follow the special directions, ask your doctor or pharmacist to help you make a schedule for taking all your drugs safely.

**Keep the bottles or boxes your drugs come in.**
- The original bottle or box tells you the name of the drug, how to take it, and what the possible side effects are.
- If you use a pill organizer, put pills in it directly from the bottle. Keep the rest in the bottle.

**Store drugs safely.**
- Store drugs in a dry, cool place.
- Do not store them in the bathroom cabinet or near a stove or microwave.
- Do not refrigerate them unless the label says to.

**Take each drug exactly as directed.**
- The bottle or box tells you how many times a day to take the drug and how much to take each time.
- The insert or the package tells you important information, too. For example, it tells you if you need to take the drug with or without food. It tells you common side effects. And it tells you danger signs to watch for.

**Order refills before you run out.**
- Call in a refill a week or more before you run out of a drug.
- Or, ask your pharmacy if it will refill your drugs at the same time each month and then call you when they are ready to be picked up.
- If you get drugs by mail, order a refill 2 weeks before you run out.

**Take every dose.**
- If you skip a dose or take a smaller dose, your drug will not work as it should. Ask your doctor or pharmacist what to do if you miss a dose.
- If you are afraid to take the full dose, talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

**Take the drug for as long as directed.**
- Even if you feel better or your symptoms stop, you need to take a drug for as long as your doctor tells you to.
- If you stop, your condition can come back or get worse.
- Some drugs must be stopped slowly or they can cause problems.

**Follow special directions.**
- Some drugs should be taken with food. Other drugs should be taken alone.
- If it is hard to follow the special directions, ask your doctor or pharmacist to help you make a schedule for taking all your drugs safely.

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**Throw out any drugs that have passed the expiration date.**
The expiration date is on the bottle or box. It says “Discard after:” or “Exp. after:” After this date, the drug may not be safe or effective. Ask your pharmacist how to safely throw away your unused drugs.

**Resources**
Visit these websites:
- [www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs](http://www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs)
- [www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)—click on Drugs & Supplements

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All drugs can have side effects. For example, a drug that helps you sleep may also make your mouth dry. Most side effects are not dangerous. And many side effects go away quickly. There are things you can do to help avoid or manage side effects. To learn more, visit our free website, www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs.

Our advice:

Tell your doctor about any side effects you have had before. Your doctor can help you avoid and manage side effects. It is very important to tell your doctor about any serious or unpleasant side effects, allergies, or bad reactions you have had with drugs in the past.

Ask about the side effects of the new drug. Talk to your doctor and pharmacist when you get a new drug. Review the information that comes with the drug.

- Ask the doctor if you will feel different when you take the drug. For example, will you feel more sleepy than usual or have an upset stomach?
- Ask which side effects are most common.
- Ask which side effects are serious.

Ask your doctor how to manage common side effects. Some common side effects, such as a dry mouth, are annoying but not dangerous. Ask if they are likely to go away.

Or ask about ways to manage them. For example, diuretics, or water pills, are for high blood pressure. They make you go to the bathroom more. Your doctor may suggest that you take the pill in the morning, so that you do not have to get up at night.

Don’t hesitate to call your doctor about a side effect. Your doctor may be able to lower the dose of the drug or find a different drug that works better for you.
Drug Safety: Side Effects

Tell your doctor if a side effect is a problem for you or if it lasts more than a few days. Your doctor may be able to prescribe another drug that will not cause the same side effects. Or your doctor may be able to tell you ways to manage or reduce side effects. Talk to your doctor before you stop taking a drug. Ask if there are other drugs for your condition, or ways to manage your side effects.

Ask about danger signs. And report any serious or on-going side effects right away. Some side effects, like vomiting or trouble breathing, can be dangerous. Ask your doctor what the danger signs are. The information sheet that comes with each drug tells you which side effects are serious.

Ask what you should do if you have a serious side effect. Should you call the doctor right away? Should you go to the Emergency Room?

Read the information that comes with each drug. Prescription drugs come with safety information for patients. This information tells you:

- How to take the drug.
- If you need to follow any special directions when you are taking the drug. For example, you may be told to avoid some other drugs, some foods, alcohol, or sun.
- Danger signs to watch for.
- Side effects.

If you need this information in your language or in large print, ask the pharmacist. The law says the pharmacy must give this to you.

Over-the-counter drugs also have side effects. Read the packaging and insert for information.

It is a good idea to review drug safety information every few months.

Resources
Visit these websites:

- [www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs](http://www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs)
- [www.medlineplus.gov](http://www.medlineplus.gov)—click on Drugs & Supplements

Before your doctor prescribes a new drug, tell her any side effects you have had to drugs. Ask about the possible side effects of the new drug. And ask about ways to avoid or reduce side effects.
The more drugs you take, the more likely you are to have a problem.

- You may have a hard time keeping track of all your drugs.
- You may find it hard to pay for all your drugs.
- You may take a drug that you do not need. Studies show that nearly 1 out of 5 people take a drug they do not need. For people over 65, the problem is worse.
- You may not be taking a drug that you do need.
- You may take the wrong drug for your condition.
- You may have serious side effects.

**Your chance of having a problem is even greater if:**

- You take 5 or more drugs.
- You take drugs for 3 or more health problems.
- You get prescriptions from more than one doctor.
- You got prescriptions during a recent stay in the hospital.

**Our advice:**

**Review all your drugs with your doctor every 6 to 12 months.**

The best way to make sure you are taking the right drugs is to review all your drugs with your primary care doctor. You should also review your drugs with your specialists.

- Take all your bottles with you. Include vitamins, herbs, supplements, and over-the-counter drugs, like ibuprofen.
- Or bring a list of the drugs and how much you take. For help making a list, visit [www.ahrq.gov](http://www.ahrq.gov). Search for “medicine record form.”
- Make a list of any side effects or problems you are having with your drugs. For example, sleepiness and an upset stomach are side effects of some drugs. But DO NOT stop taking a drug unless your doctor tells you to stop.
Drug Safety: Managing Multiple Drugs

When you review your drugs with your doctor, ask these questions about each drug you take:

Do I still need this drug?
Each of your drugs was prescribed for a specific problem. If you no longer have that problem, ask your doctor about stopping the drug.

Does this drug do the same thing as another drug I take?
This can happen because you got similar drugs from different doctors. Or you may take a brand-name and a generic drug that do the same thing. You may not need both drugs.

Should I still be taking the drug?
Make sure you are not taking a drug longer than you need to. For example, if you take a proton pump inhibitor (PPI) for heartburn, such as Prilosec or Prevacid, you can usually stop after 6 months. There are some drugs, like pain medicines, that you should use for only a short time.

Is there anything else I can do instead of taking this drug?
There may be other treatments or lifestyle changes that you can try. For example, if you have high cholesterol, making changes to your diet may work as well as taking a drug.

Is the drug safe for people my age or people with my health problem?
There may be drugs that you should not take if you are older. This is because the body processes drugs differently as we age.

Or, you may be taking a drug that is not safe because the doctor who prescribed it did not know all of your health issues.

Does this drug interact with any other drug I am taking?
Drug interactions can cause several problems. One or more of the drugs may be less effective. You may have more side effects.

Mixing drugs, vitamins, and herbs can also cause problems. For example, some drugs are less effective if you are also taking iron supplements. You can check for drug interactions at our free website, www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org. Click on Prescription Drugs, and then on My Medicine Tracker.

Tips for managing multiple drugs:
• Keep a list of all the drugs you take. Put it in your wallet.
• Keep the bottles your drugs come in. They help you remember the names of the drugs and how to take them. The label also tells you how many refills you have left and where to call for a refill.
• Make a schedule that shows when to take each drug. List the time, the name of the drug, and the amount you should take.
• You can use pill organizers, timers, and alerts to help you take the right pill at the right time.

Resources
To learn more about your drugs, visit:
• www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs
• www.medlineplus.gov
What is a generic drug?
A generic is a copy of a brand-name drug. A brand-name drug has a patent. When the patent runs out—usually after 10 to 14 years—other companies can make generic versions of the drug.

Drug companies spend billions of dollars advertising brand-name drugs, like Lipitor and Celebrex. But often you can get a generic drug that works just as well—and costs much less!

Are generics as good as brand-names?
By law, all generics must have the same active ingredients as the brands they copy. They must be the same strength and work the same way as the brand-name drug. Generic drugs are not like generic cereal or canned goods, where the brand name can be a better product.

What is different about generics?
The big difference is that generics usually cost less than brand-name drugs. There are a few other differences—like color, shape, size, or taste—but they do not affect the quality of the drug.

Generics have different names. Most drugs have a brand-name and a generic name. For example, the generic name for Viagra is sildenafil, which is the main ingredient in Viagra.

Get to know the generic names. Do not pay for brand-names just because you recognize them or they are easier to say.

Generics look different. Brand-name drugs are often advertised by color and shape. Remember the ads for the “purple pill” for heartburn? Generics are often plain white or pink pills.

Do not be fooled by looks. Sometimes the shape or coating on a brand-name drug will make it easier to swallow or digest, but this does not make it better.

Our advice:
Try the generic whenever possible. You will get the same benefit to your health, and you will save money.
Generic Drugs: The Same Medicine for Less Money

How much money can I save with generics?

- If you pay a flat fee co-pay for your drugs, the co-pay is lower. You may pay $5 to $15 for the generic drug but $15 to $35 for the brand-name drug.
- If you pay a co-pay based on the full cost of the drug, like a 30% co-pay, you also save money. The full cost of a brand-name drug is about 3 times the cost of the generic version.
- If you do not have drug coverage and you pay out of pocket for your medicine, you save even more with generics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You pay:</th>
<th>Flat fee co-pay</th>
<th>30% co-pay</th>
<th>Full cost (no drug coverage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brand-name drug</td>
<td>$20</td>
<td>$45</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic drug</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each month you save</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>$100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can the pharmacist give me a generic if my doctor prescribed a brand-name drug?
Yes. In most cases, your pharmacist can give you the generic instead of the brand-name drug.

What if there is no generic version of the brand-name drug I take?
Ask your doctor about generics in the same class of drugs. Ask if one of these generics would work as well as the brand-name drug. For example, there is a class of drugs, called statins, to treat high cholesterol. Some statins come as generics, while others do not. If you take a brand-name statin, ask if one of the generic statins would work for you.

Remember, generic drugs have been in use for more than 10 years—first as a brand-name and then as a generic—so we know a lot more about their safety than about brand-name drugs.

Resources

Compare Costs
This chart lists the full cost—what you pay if you do not have drug coverage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Brand-name drug</th>
<th>Cost per month</th>
<th>Generic substitute</th>
<th>Cost per month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diabetes</td>
<td>Glucotrol 10mg tablet</td>
<td>$42–$84</td>
<td>Glipizide 10mg tablet</td>
<td>$4–$8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart failure</td>
<td>Coreg 12.5mg</td>
<td>$166</td>
<td>Carvedilol 12.5mg</td>
<td>$44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High cholesterol</td>
<td>Zocor 20mg</td>
<td>$175</td>
<td>Simvastatin 20mg</td>
<td>$70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migraine</td>
<td>Imitrex 25mg tablet</td>
<td>$78</td>
<td>Sumatriptan 25mg tablet</td>
<td>$48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Each health plan has its own formulary. If your health plan covers prescription drugs, it will have a list of the drugs it covers. This list is called a preferred drug list, or formulary. Using your plan’s formulary will help you save money on your drugs.

A group of doctors and other experts choose the drugs on the formulary. The formulary includes common drugs for most health conditions.

Each plan’s formulary is different. However, all the drugs must meet Food and Drug Administration (FDA) safety standards. The FDA is the agency of the U.S. government that regulates drug testing, labeling, and safety.

Some drugs on the formulary may cost more than others.

With some formularies, you pay the same amount for each drug you get.

But many formularies have 2 or more cost levels, or tiers. The higher the level, the more the drug costs you.

Generic drugs usually cost less than brand-name drugs. Some brand-name drugs may cost more than others, and some are not on the formulary at all.

Some kinds of drugs are not on the formulary.

- Over-the-counter drugs are usually not on the formulary—unless there is a stronger version that you can get by prescription only.

- Drugs for cosmetic use, sexual problems, or weight loss are usually not on the formulary. Your health plan will not pay for these drugs unless your doctor can show that you need them for medical reasons.

Formularies change.

- New drugs may be added. If you need a drug that is new, ask your doctor if it has been added to the formulary.

- A generic version of a drug may replace the brand-name version, or one generic may replace another. When this happens, your co-pay may change or your pills may look different.

- Some drugs may be removed from the formulary, because they are not safe or they do not work well.

Formularies can change. If your pills look different or the cost changes, talk to the pharmacist. If your medicine is not on the formulary, ask if there is a generic version that is on the formulary.
What if a drug I need is not on the formulary or is taken off the formulary?

- **Your doctor** can ask your health plan to approve the drug. This is called “prior authorization” or “pre-approval.”
- **Your health plan** should approve or deny your request within a few days.
- If your health plan denies your request, you can file an appeal. Call your plan, or ask your doctor for help. If you have Medicare, call 1-800-MEDICARE and ask what to do.
- Your health plan may say that you have to try a drug on the formulary before you can get another drug. This is called “step therapy.” If the drug on the formulary does not work for you, then your doctor can ask for the more expensive drug.

To view your plan’s formulary:
Call your health plan. Or go to your plan’s website and search for it.

**Resources**
If you have Medicare, find out more about Medicare formularies at:

- [www.medicareinteractive.org](http://www.medicareinteractive.org)
- [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov)

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**Our advice:**

Drugs that are on the formulary usually cost less than drugs that are not on the formulary.

- **When your doctor writes a new prescription,** ask if the drug is on your plan’s formulary and if it is a generic drug. Or ask for the least expensive brand-name drug on the formulary.

- **When you fill a prescription,** ask the pharmacist if the drug is on your plan’s formulary. If it is not, ask if you can get a drug on the formulary instead. In most cases, the pharmacist can replace a brand-name drug with its generic version. Sometimes the pharmacist will need to call your doctor or health plan.

- **Before you change health plans,** find out if the drugs you need are on the new plan’s formulary. You can call the plan and ask. Or you may be able to look at the formulary on the plan’s website.

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Prescription drugs can be expensive. Even if you have health insurance that covers drugs, your drugs can cost a lot. And if you do not have drug coverage, you may pay very high prices for your drugs.

High prices can keep people from buying the drugs they need. But there are things you can do to save money on drugs—and sometimes a lot of money. To learn more, visit our free website, www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs.

Our advice:
Here is our advice to help you get the best prices on your drugs.

Talk to your doctors and pharmacists.
Tell your doctors and pharmacists that the cost of your drugs is important to you. Ask your doctor to prescribe generic drugs if possible. Tell the pharmacist that you want generics. Generics usually cost much less than brand-name drugs.

Compare drug prices.
Drug prices vary. In general, you can save on generics—and sometimes on brand-name drugs—by shopping around locally or online.

Shop around locally.
Call or visit at least 3 pharmacies. Include at least one large discount store. Wal-Mart and Target sell a 30-day supply of many generic drugs for about $4.00 and a 90-day supply for about $10.00 each. Also ask about discount cards. They can save you 10% to 25% of drug costs.

Tell each pharmacist the names of the drugs you need. Ask how much they cost. Explain that you do not have drug coverage and that you will be paying for the drugs yourself.

If the store with the lowest price is far away, ask a store near you to match the lower price. Smaller pharmacies will often do this if you live in the neighborhood.

Many pharmacies, both large and small, offer drug discount programs. Ask if your drug is offered in one of these programs.
Comparison Shopping: Getting the Best Price on Your Drugs

More ways to save money on drugs if you have a low income:

**Patient assistance programs:** These programs can help people with low incomes get brand-name drugs. Most major drug companies have these programs. Applying can take time, but the drugs are usually free if you do not have drug coverage.

These websites can help you find programs:
- [www.rxassist.org](http://www.rxassist.org)
- [www.pparx.org](http://www.pparx.org) (1-888-477-2669)
- [www.benefitscheckuprx.org](http://www.benefitscheckuprx.org)
- [www.needymeds.org](http://www.needymeds.org)
- [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) (1-800-MEDICARE)

**State drug discount cards:** Some state governments offer drug discount cards. You have to meet age and income limits. Some programs have a website that compares drug prices at different drugstores. For a list of program phone numbers and websites, go to: [www.rxassist.org/patients/res-state-programs.cfm](http://www.rxassist.org/patients/res-state-programs.cfm).

**Medicare low-income subsidy:** This national program helps people with Medicare pay for prescription drugs. This is also called the Extra Help program. To learn more, call 1-800-MEDICARE. Or visit: [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

**Shop online.**

Shopping on the Web is one of the best, and fastest, ways to compare drug prices and save money. Online pharmacies sell drugs for 35% or more off the regular price.

Online shopping is especially convenient if you buy a drug regularly for a chronic condition, like high blood pressure or high cholesterol.

You, or your doctor, can fax or mail your prescription to the online pharmacy. The drugs will be mailed to you or to a local store where you can pick them up.

Be careful. Use only U.S. websites that have the “VIPPS” seal. VIPPS stands for Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Site. And never buy drugs from websites that send you spam e-mail.

Some well-known VIPPS pharmacy sites are:

- [www.drugstore.com](http://www.drugstore.com)
- [www.familymeds.com](http://www.familymeds.com)
- [www.walgreens.com](http://www.walgreens.com)
- [www.cvs.com](http://www.cvs.com)
- [www.costco.com](http://www.costco.com)

This series is produced by Consumers Union and Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs, a public information project supported by grants from the Engelberg Foundation and the National Library of Medicine of the National Institutes of Health. These materials were also made possible by a grant from the State Attorney General Consumer and Prescriber Education Grant Program which is funded by the multi-state settlement of consumer fraud claims regarding the marketing of the prescription drug Neurontin. This brief should not be viewed as a substitute for a consultation with a medical or health professional. It is provided to enhance communication with your doctor, not replace it. Neither the National Library of Medicine nor the National Institutes of Health are responsible for the content or advice herein.
Do you need help paying for prescription drugs? You may qualify for a Prescription Assistance Program (PAP). PAPs are also called Patient Assistance Programs. Most drug companies offer PAPs. Some state governments offer PAPs. And there are some PAPs for people with certain diseases or conditions.

**A Word to the Wise**
Drug companies sponsor most PAPs. The PAP helps you buy the company's brand-name drugs. The company hopes that when you no longer qualify for the program, you will still buy the brand-name drug.

How do I qualify for a PAP? You must need help paying for your drugs. Usually you cannot get a PAP if your health insurance covers the drug.

For many PAPs, your household income must be less than $20,000 for one person, $28,000 for a couple, $35,000 for a family of 3, and $40,000 for a family of 4. Usually, you cannot have more than $15,000–$20,000 in assets. Assets include savings, mutual funds, and retirement savings. Your home and one car do not count as assets.

However, there are some programs for people with higher incomes. You may qualify if you do not have drug coverage and you need expensive drugs. To learn more, visit our free website, [www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs](http://www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs).

Pharmacists are a great resource to help you find a PAP. Don’t hesitate to ask them. Your doctor may also be able to suggest ways to save on drug costs.
Help Buying Drugs: Prescription Assistance Programs (PAPs)

Our advice:

Remember that the brand-name drug will usually cost you more than a generic drug. Before you apply for a PAP, ask your doctor if there is a generic drug that would work just as well as the brand-name drug covered by the PAP.

Can I get help from a PAP if I have Medicaid?
In most cases, no. This is because Medicaid usually pays for your drugs.

Can I get help applying for a PAP?
Your clinic, pharmacy, or doctor’s office may be able to help you apply. If you have Medicare, call your local State Health Insurance Program. To find it, call 1-800-MEDICARE.

How do I apply for a PAP?
You need to fill out an application form for each program you apply to. Usually, each form will ask for:

- Your income and a copy of your last tax return or a pay stub.
- Your assets, such as savings, stocks, bonds, mutual funds, and retirement savings.
- Proof that you are a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident.
- Proof that you do not have health coverage for the drugs you need. This can be a letter denying you benefits or saying that your benefits are ending.
- A current prescription for each drug. You may also need a signed letter or form from your doctor.

How will I get my drugs?
Some programs have you pick up the drugs at a pharmacy. Others send you the drugs in the mail. A few programs send the drugs to your doctor’s office.

Can I get help from a PAP if I have Medicare?
If you already have Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage, some PAPs will help you while you are in the “doughnut hole.” (The doughnut hole is slowly getting smaller, and it will end in 2020.)

Before you apply for a PAP, you should apply for Medicare’s Extra Help or Low Income Subsidy (LIS) program. It helps you pay for Medicare Part D. To learn more, call 1-800-MEDICARE. In California, call HICAP at 1-800-434-0222.

How can I find a PAP?
- Ask your doctor, clinic, or pharmacist.
- Go to the website for the company that makes the drug you need. Most drug companies have links to their PAPs on their home page.
- Look online. We recommend the following websites:
  - RxAssist
    www.rxassist.org
  - Partnership for Prescription Assistance
    www.pparx.org
  - Needy Meds
    www.needymeds.org
  - Medicare
    www.medicare.gov/pap
  - Medicare Rights Center
    www.medicarerights.org

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If You Have Type 2 Diabetes
When you have diabetes, you have too much glucose, or sugar, in your blood. This can cause serious health problems, such as heart disease, stroke, and blindness. People with diabetes who do not lower their blood sugar usually live about 8 years less than people who do not have diabetes.

Lowering Your Blood Sugar
Some people with type 2 diabetes can lower their blood sugar by changing the way they eat, by exercising, and by losing weight. Over time, most people also need an oral diabetes drugs.

The Best Drugs at the Lowest Cost
There are 6 groups of oral diabetes drugs. Each group has a different active ingredient and works in a different way. The chart on the other side of this fact sheet compares the 6 groups of drugs.

Newer drugs cost more, but they may not work better. For example, Starlix, Glyset, Januvia, and Precose are newer, brand-name drugs. They cost $111 to $232 per month. But they do not lower blood sugar as well as the older, generic drugs, like metformin and glipizide, which cost only about $4 to $18 per month.

Newer drugs may not be safer. All oral diabetes drugs can have side effects, such as low blood sugar (hypoglycemia), weight gain, nausea, and swelling in the legs and ankles (edema). But the older drugs have been around longer, so the side effects are better known. Two of the newer drugs, Actos and Avandia, are linked to a higher risk of heart failure and bone fractures.

Two drugs may work better than one. Some people need 2 drugs to lower their blood sugar enough.

Our advice:
We chose the following as Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs. All are low-cost generics. Discuss these choices with your doctor.

- **Metformin**
  - alone or with glipizide or glimepiride

- **Glipizide and Glipizide Sustained Release**
  - alone or with metformin

- **Glimepiride**
  - alone or with metformin

We recommend trying metformin first, unless you have kidney disease or heart failure. If metformin does not lower your blood sugar enough, ask your doctor to add glipizide or glimepiride. If these drugs cause problems, you and your doctor may want to consider Actos. However, Actos costs more and there is a higher risk of heart failure when you take it.

For more information on diabetes drugs and many other medicines, visit our free website, [www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs](http://www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs)
### Advantages and Disadvantages of the Oral Diabetes Drugs

**Consumer Reports Health Best Buy Drugs are in blue.** We recommend these drugs because they are effective, generally safe, and cost less. Work with your doctor to choose the best drug or drugs for you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Biguanides</td>
<td>• Low risk of low blood sugar</td>
<td>• High risk of nausea, bloating, and diarrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generic Metformin</td>
<td>• Does not cause weight gain</td>
<td>• Not safe for people who have kidney disease or heart failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drop in triglycerides&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Need to take 2 to 3 times a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No rise in blood pressure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low cost: $4 to $18 per month or less&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulfonylureas</td>
<td>• Fast-acting</td>
<td>• Weight gain of 5 to 10 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generic Glipizide, Glimepiride, and Glyburide</td>
<td>• No rise in blood pressure or bad (LDL) cholesterol&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Higher risk of low blood sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Take once a day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Low-cost: $4 to $13 per month or less&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpha-glucosidase Inhibitors</td>
<td>• Less risk of low blood sugar than Sulfonylureas</td>
<td>• Less drop in blood sugar than Sulfonylureas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brand-names Glyset and Precose</td>
<td>• Does not cause weight gain</td>
<td>• Higher risk of nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drop in triglycerides&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• High cost: $111 to $132 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No rise in cholesterol</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thiazolidinediones</td>
<td>• Less risk of low blood sugar than Sulfonylureas</td>
<td>• Higher risk of heart failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brand-names Actos and Avandia</td>
<td>• Slight rise in good (HDL) cholesterol&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Higher risk of heart attack (Avandia only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drop in triglycerides (Actos)</td>
<td>• Weight gain of 5 to 10 pounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Higher risk of heart failure</td>
<td>• Risk of fluid build-up (edema) and low blood iron (anemia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rise in bad (LDL) cholesterol&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>• Rise in bad (LDL) cholesterol&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• High cost: $137 to $274 per month</td>
<td>• High cost: $137 to $274 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meglitinides</td>
<td>• Fast-acting</td>
<td>• Risk of low blood sugar and weight gain of 5 to 10 pounds (Prandin only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brand-names Prandin and Starlix</td>
<td>• No rise in cholesterol</td>
<td>• Less drop in blood sugar with Starlix than Sulfonylureas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• High cost: $174 to $195 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitiagliptin</td>
<td>• Low risk of low blood sugar</td>
<td>• Less drop in blood sugar than Sulfonylureas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brand-name Januvia</td>
<td>• Does not cause weight gain</td>
<td>• High cost: $225 to $235 per month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Less known about potential side effects compared to older drugs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>1</sup> Triglycerides are a kind of fat in the blood that can clog the arteries and cause heart disease.

<sup>2</sup> A three-month supply of these drugs may cost as little as $10 through programs offered at some chain and independent pharmacies, and some grocery stores. Some programs have restrictions.

<sup>3</sup> LDL cholesterol is a kind of fat that builds up on the walls of the blood vessels and makes them narrower. If a piece breaks off, it can cause a blood clot.

<sup>4</sup> HDL cholesterol is called good cholesterol because it helps remove LDL (bad) cholesterol from the blood.

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What is GERD?
You may know GERD as heartburn or acid reflux. GERD stands for gastroesophageal reflux disease. It occurs when the ring of muscles between your stomach and your esophagus—the tube that leads from your throat to your stomach—doesn’t work right. The muscles either don’t close all the way, or they open too often. Then acid from your stomach can back up, or reflux, into your esophagus. This causes that burning feeling that starts in your chest and moves up into your throat.

Treatment
Treatment depends on how often you have heartburn symptoms.

- If you don’t get heartburn often, try taking an over-the-counter antacid, like Maalox or Tums. If these do not work, you can try an H2 blocker, like Pepcid or Zantac. They work more slowly than antacids, but they provide relief for a longer time.

- If you have heartburn more than twice a week for more than 4 weeks and antacids don’t help, you need to see a doctor. You probably need a medicine called a proton pump inhibitor (PPI).

Taking a PPI for GERD
We compared 7 proton pump inhibitors (PPIs). This is what we found:

All PPIs work well. All the PPIs completely relieved symptoms for about 7 out of 10 people within 4 weeks. And they all healed damage to the esophagus in about 9 out of 10 people within 8 weeks.

All PPIs are generally safe for short-term use. PPIs can cause some minor side effects, such as headache and diarrhea. But most people can use PPIs without problems. And most need a PPI for only a few months. If PPIs are used for more than a few months, there is a higher risk of pneumonia, infection, and fractures.

PPIs differ a lot in price.
Over-the-counter PPIs cost about $19–$24 per month. Prescription generic PPIs cost $69–$172 per month. Prescription brand-name PPIs cost $170–$375 per month.

Our advice:
We chose the following as Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs. You can get them without a prescription:

- Prilosec OTC
- Generic Omeprazole OTC
- Prevacid 24HR

Many people take PPIs for too long. If you are taking a PPI, ask your doctor if you can stop taking it after a few months.
### Comparing the Cost of PPIs

**Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs are in blue.** We recommend these drugs because they work as well as the other PPIs but they cost much less. Each is taken once a day. For more information, visit our free website, [www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs](http://www.ConsumerReportsHealth.org/BestBuyDrugs).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generic Name &amp; Dose</th>
<th>Brand Name (or generic)</th>
<th>Cost Per Month(^1,2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esomeprazole 20 mg capsules</td>
<td>Nexium</td>
<td>$248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esomeprazole 40 mg capsules</td>
<td>Nexium</td>
<td>$239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dexlansoprazole 30 mg sustained-release tablets</td>
<td>Kapidex</td>
<td>$174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dexlansoprazole 60 mg sustained-release tablets</td>
<td>Kapidex</td>
<td>$170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lansoprazole 20 mg delayed-release tablets</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prevacid 24HR</strong></td>
<td><strong>$23</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lansoprazole 15 mg delayed-release capsules</td>
<td>Prevacid</td>
<td>$267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lansoprazole 15 mg delayed-release tablets</td>
<td>Prevacid</td>
<td>$242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lansoprazole 30 mg delayed-release capsules</td>
<td>Prevacid</td>
<td>$253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lansoprazole 30 mg delayed-release tablets</td>
<td>Prevacid</td>
<td>$237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Omeprazole 20 mg tablets</strong></td>
<td><strong>Prilosec OTC</strong></td>
<td><strong>$24</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omeprazole 10 mg delayed-release capsules</td>
<td>Prilosec</td>
<td>$192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omeprazole 10 mg sustained-release capsules</td>
<td>generic</td>
<td>$110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omeprazole 20 mg delayed-release capsules</td>
<td>Prilosec</td>
<td>$220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omeprazole 20 mg delayed-release capsules</td>
<td>generic</td>
<td>$69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omeprazole 40 mg sustained-release capsules</td>
<td>Prilosec</td>
<td>$378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omeprazole 40 mg sustained-release capsules</td>
<td>generic</td>
<td>$172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omeprazole/Sodium Bicarbonate 20 mg/1,100 mg capsules</td>
<td>Zegerid</td>
<td>$245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omeprazole/Sodium Bicarbonate 40 mg/1,100 mg capsules</td>
<td>Zegerid</td>
<td>$249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omeprazole/Sodium Bicarbonate 20 mg/1,100 mg capsules</td>
<td>Zegerid OTC</td>
<td>$21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantoprazole 20 mg delayed-release tablets</td>
<td>Protonix</td>
<td>$199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantoprazole 20 mg delayed-release tablets</td>
<td>generic</td>
<td>$142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantoprazole 40 mg delayed-release tablets</td>
<td>Protonix</td>
<td>$192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pantoprazole 40 mg delayed-release tablets</td>
<td>generic</td>
<td>$137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabaprazole 20 mg tablets</td>
<td>AcipHex</td>
<td>$274</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1. Average monthly cost is based on recommended dosage of one pill daily.
2. Monthly cost reflects nationwide retail average prices for June 2009, rounded to the nearest dollar. Information derived by *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs* from data provided by Wolters Kluwer Health, Pharmaceutical Audit Suite® Wolters Kluwer Health is not involved in our analysis or recommendations.

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What Are Statins?
Statins are drugs used to lower cholesterol and help prevent heart disease. Cholesterol is a fat in the blood. There is HDL (good) cholesterol and LDL (bad) cholesterol. If you have too much LDL cholesterol, it can build up on the walls of blood vessels. This build-up is called plaque. It clogs the blood vessels and can lead to a heart attack or stroke.

Lowering Your Cholesterol
Some people can lower their cholesterol by exercising and eating less saturated fat. Saturated fat is in meat, dairy products, bakery goods, and many snack foods. For other people, exercising and eating a healthier diet is not enough. They need to take a statin.

Before you start a statin, you and your doctor should look at your LDL cholesterol and your other risks for heart disease. These risks include smoking, obesity, lack of exercise, and having diabetes, high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, or a family history of heart disease.

Choosing a Statin
The best statin for you depends on your LDL cholesterol and your other risks. Some statins lower LDL cholesterol more than others. And some reduce the risk of heart attack and death from heart disease or stroke more than others.

Some statins cost much more than others.
Generic statins can cost $11 a month or less. Brand-name statins can cost more than $200 a month. Since most people take statins for many years, cost is important.

Higher doses have higher risks.
Most people should take the lowest dose they can. The higher the dose, the greater the risk of serious side effects, including muscle, kidney, and liver problems.

Our advice:
We compared the effectiveness, risks, and cost of different statins. We chose these as Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs:

Generic lovastatin or pravastatin—if you need to lower your LDL cholesterol by less than 30%

Generic simvastatin (20 mg or 40 mg)—if you need to lower your LDL cholesterol by 30% or more

Atorvastatin (brand-name Lipitor) (40 mg or 80 mg)—if you have had a heart attack, or if you have coronary heart disease with very high LDL cholesterol

Warning: If you are taking a statin and have muscle aches, pain, or weakness, call your doctor right away. This could be a sign of a dangerous breakdown in the muscle tissue.
The Best Statin at the Best Price

**Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs** are in **blue** and **bold black**. We recommend these drugs because they are effective, generally safe, and cost less. Work with your doctor to choose the best statin and dose for you.

- **If you need to lower your LDL cholesterol less than 30%, look at the drugs listed in blue.**
- **If you need to lower your LDL cholesterol more than 30%, look at the drugs listed in bold black.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generic Name and Dose</th>
<th>Brand Name</th>
<th>Average Cost Per Month</th>
<th>% of LDL Cholesterol Lowered</th>
<th>Reduces Heart Attack Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atorvastatin 10 mg</td>
<td>Lipitor</td>
<td>$115</td>
<td>34–38%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atorvastatin 20 mg</td>
<td>Lipitor</td>
<td>$161</td>
<td>42–46%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atorvastatin 40 mg</td>
<td>Lipitor</td>
<td>$165</td>
<td>47–51%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atorvastatin 80 mg</td>
<td>Lipitor</td>
<td>$168</td>
<td>46–54%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluvastatin 20 mg</td>
<td>Lescol</td>
<td>$120</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>Likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluvastatin 40 mg</td>
<td>Lescol</td>
<td>$120</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluvastatin sustained release 80 mg</td>
<td>Lescol XL</td>
<td>$152</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovastatin 10 mg</td>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>$11</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovastatin 20 mg</td>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>$15</td>
<td>24–27%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovastatin 40 mg</td>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>$51</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovastatin 80 mg</td>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>$103</td>
<td>39–48%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovastatin 20 mg</td>
<td>Mevacor</td>
<td>$82</td>
<td>24–27%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovastatin 40 mg</td>
<td>Mevacor</td>
<td>$144</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovastatin sustained release 20 mg</td>
<td>Altoprev</td>
<td>$221</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lovastatin sustained release 40 mg</td>
<td>Altoprev</td>
<td>$277</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lovastatin sustained release 60 mg</td>
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<td>$253</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generic Name and Dose</th>
<th>Brand Name</th>
<th>Average Cost Per Month</th>
<th>% of LDL Cholesterol Lowered</th>
<th>Reduces Heart Attack Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pravastatin 10 mg</td>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>$34</td>
<td>18–25%</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pravastatin 20 mg</td>
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<td>$32</td>
<td>23–29%</td>
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<td>$37</td>
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<td>Generic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simvastatin 10 mg</td>
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</table>

1 “Generic” indicates a drug sold by generic name.
2 Prices reflect nationwide retail average for April 2010, rounded to the nearest dollar. Information derived by Consumer Reports Health Best Buy Drugs from data provided by Wolters Kluwer Pharma Solutions. Wolters Kluwer is not involved in our analysis or recommendations.
3 Nonfatal and fatal heart attack plus deaths attributed to heart disease.