

{First Name} {Last Name}
{Address 1}
{Address 2}
{Address 3}
{City} {State} {5-digit zip code}

**Did you know you
could save money on
an allergy medicine
and still get
the same relief?**

{Date}

Dear Member:

Allergy season is never far away. You know how tough last season was, and you want to be ready when the next onslaught of pollen, ragweed and other allergens blow your way. But if you're like most people, you probably don't know that you may be able to treat these conditions *just as well* with medicines that cost much less than what you're using now.

The clinical news in a nutshell.

The latest research from Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs¹ and several nationally known studies^{2,3,4} on drugs that treat these types of allergies found that:

- ◆ Generics are clinically effective and as safe as the brand-name prescription antihistamines.
- ◆ The over-the-counter drugs in this category are just as effective as both the generic and brand-name prescription medications.

So, why are we telling you this?

According to our records, you've filled prescriptions in the last 12 months for one or more of the brand-name allergy medications Allegra[®], Allegra-D[®], Clarinex[®], Clarinex-D[®], Semprex-D[®] or Xyzal[®]. And we're making changes that will affect the coverage of these drugs and your out-of-pocket costs. Beginning January 1, 2009, these brand-name prescriptions will no longer be covered by your health plan. Your plan **will** cover the generic version of Allegra, fexofenadine. Consequently, if you have received prior approval from us for one of the brand-name drugs that will no longer be covered, your approval will expire on January 1, 2009 and your benefit coverage for such drug will end. However, you also have the confidence of knowing you can choose from a variety of equally effective and less expensive over-the-counter (OTC) versions of these drugs.

With this change in coverage, you'll be able to save money in different ways.

1. *You'll only have a copay if you choose fexofenadine, the generic version of Allegra that will continue to be covered by your plan.* If you continue to use the brand name drugs that are no longer covered by your plan, you will have to pay the full price.
2. *But you may save even more money and enjoy added convenience by using the over-the-counter equivalents of these drugs.* In this case, either Claritin[®] or the new over-the-counter Zyrtec[®]. These drugs may give you the same relief – and the cost could be less than your previous prescription copay.

Here's something to get you started saving money.

If you and your doctor decide a change is in order, we're sending you something to get you started. To help provide additional savings, we've enclosed \$4 coupons for your first purchase of these OTC alternatives at retail⁵:

- ♦ **Claritin**: use this coupon for any 15-count or larger package of Claritin or Claritin D⁶.
- ♦ **Zyrtec**: use this coupon for either a 30-count Zyrtec or larger, 24-count Zyrtec-D⁶ or any Children's Zyrtec.

We're keeping your doctors in the loop. They know what you know.

Doctors in our networks are being told about this change to your health plan. We're also letting them know about the information we're sharing with you in this letter. Contact your doctor and discuss whether one of the OTC options or the covered generic, fexofenadine, is right for you.

Still have questions? Want to know more?

Call the number on the back of your member ID card. Or go online to www.claritin.com, or www.zyrtecotc.com for fast, easy information on specific OTC alternatives.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey J. Holmstrom, DO
Medical Director

Enclosures

- 1 Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs™, Treating Allergies, Hay Fever and Hives: The Antihistamines. Comparing Effectiveness, Safety and Price. Consumers Union, 2005.
- 2 Oregon Evidence-based Practice Center, Oregon Health & Science University, Drug Class Review on Newer Antihistamines. Final Report Update 1. 2006.. <http://www.ohsu.edu/drugeffectiveness/reports/final.cfm>.
- 3 Hampel F, Ratner P, Mansfield L, Meeves S, Liao Y, Georges G. Fexofenadine hydrochloride, 180 mg, exhibits equivalent efficacy to cetirizine, 10 mg, with less drowsiness in patients with moderate-to-severe seasonal allergic rhinitis. *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*. 2003 Oct; 91 (4):354-61.
- 4 Howarth PH, Stern MA, Roi L, Reynolds R, Bousquet J. Double-blind, placebo-controlled study comparing the efficacy and safety of fexofenadine hydrochloride (120 and 180 mg once daily) and cetirizine in seasonal allergic rhinitis. *Journal of Allergy Clinical Immunology*. 1999; 104 (5):927-933.
- 5 Please note the expiration dates of the manufacturers' coupons.
- 6 This product will be available without a prescription in most states; federal law requires it to be kept behind the pharmacy or retail counter.

The drug names listed here are the registered and/or unregistered service marks of third-party pharmaceutical companies unrelated to and unaffiliated with Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield.

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