

Important Information about changes that will affect the coverage of certain prescription drugs in your health plan.

Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPI)

First, here's the clinical news.

The latest research from The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality¹, Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs² and several nationally known studies³ found that all of the medications which treat heartburn, acid reflux, and these types of stomach problems (called PPIs, short for Proton Pump Inhibitors) are just as effective as one another. Here's what they all agreed:

- The brand-name drugs in this category are equally effective.
- A generic alternative is just as effective as the brand name drugs.
- The over-the-counter drugs in this category are just as effective as the drugs available only by prescription.

Why are we telling you all this?

We're making changes that will affect the coverage of these drugs and your out-of-pocket costs. Beginning January 1, 2009, the following drugs will no longer be covered by your health plan: Aciphex[®], Prilosec[®] 40mg, Zegerid[®], Protonix[®], pantoprazole, or omeprazole 40mg. If you have received prior approval from us for one of the above drugs that will no longer be covered, your approval will expire and no longer be effective on January 1, 2009 and your benefit coverage for such drug will end.

Your plan will still cover Nexium[®] and Prevacid[®], two equally effective brand-name PPI prescription alternatives in Tier 2. The generic equivalent omeprazole 10mg and omeprazole 20mg will be covered at Tier 1. We will also cover Prilosec OTC[®] (over the counter) at Tier 1.

By changing the coverage for these drugs, you'll be able to save money in different ways.

1. *You'll only have a copay if you choose Prevacid and Nexium, the brand-name PPI drugs that will continue to be covered by your plan.* However, if you continue to use drugs that are not covered by your plan, you will have to pay the full retail price for those drugs.
2. *You may save money if you use omeprazole 10mg or 20mg, a generic PPI.* Ask your doctor if omeprazole 10mg or 20mg is right for you. This generic PPI may have the lowest copayment. Omeprazole contains the same active ingredients in the same amount as brand-name drug Prilosec. The Food and Drug Administration tests and certifies that all generic drugs are as effective as their brand-name alternatives and that they meet the same quality and safety standards.
3. *But you may save even more money by using an over-the-counter drug.* In this case, Prilosec OTC[®]. It may give you the same relief and will be covered at your Tier 1 copay, with a physician's prescription.

Allergy Medications

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 seasonal allergies, hay fever and other 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?

Beginning January 1, 2009 the following brand-name allergy medications will no longer be covered by your health plan: Allegra[®], Allegra-D[®], Clarinex[®], Clarinex-D[®], Semprex-D[®] or Xyzal[®]. 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.

Your plan will cover the generic version of Allegra, fexofenadine. 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 retail 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.

Ophthalmic Allergy Agents (aka allergy eye drops)

The clinical news in a nutshell.

- ◆ All drugs in this category are clinically equivalent in treating the “itchy eyes” associated with seasonal allergies.
- ◆ No single allergy eye drop product has been shown to be clinically superior.
- ◆ All offer safe, effective relief.

Why are we telling you this?

Beginning January 1, 2009, these following brand-name medications will no longer be covered by your health plan: Alamast[®], Alocril[®], Alomide[®], Elestat[®], Emadine[®], Optivar[®], Pataday[™] and Patanol[®]. If you received prior approval from us for one of these brand-name prescription drugs, your approval will expire on January 1, 2009 and your benefit coverage for such drugs will end.

Your plan will still cover the generic drug, cromolyn sodium. And you'll also have the confidence of knowing there are a variety of equally effective over-the-counter allergy eye drops available to you.

You can start paying less for the same relief.

1. *You'll only have a copay if you choose cromolyn sodium.* If you choose the brand-name prescriptions, you will have to pay the full retail price.
2. *But you may save even more money if you choose one of the over-the-counter drugs.* And, if you switch to an over-the-counter allergy eye drop – Alaway or Zaditor, for example – you'll no longer need a prescription to purchase these products. They may give you the same relief – and the cost could be less than your previous prescription copay. Plus, you'll enjoy the convenience of eliminating that extra phone call or trip to the doctor.

We're keeping doctors in the loop so they'll know what you know.

Doctors in our networks are being told about this change to your healthplan. We're also letting them know about the information we're sharing with you in this letter. Contact your own doctor to see if an OTC medicine or prescription drug that is covered by your plan 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 prevacid.com, purplepill.com and prilosecotc.com for fast, easy information on each specific alternative.