

How to find discounts on brand drugs

For many Americans without prescription drug coverage, the costs associated with medications can be overwhelming. While many treatment plans are only effective when a patient takes her/his medicine regularly (such as infections or chronic conditions), the high cost of medications can make this difficult. One way to reduce costs if you are un- or under insured is to obtain care at a facility that participates in the 340B Drug Discount Program (340B Program). Regardless of income or employment, if you pay out-of-pocket for your medical services you can save up to half of the cost of your medications. It is an excellent solution for those who do not have prescription drug coverage: musicians, food servers, independent contractors and migrant farm workers, to name a few.

What is the 340B Drug Discount Program?

The 340B Program requires drug manufacturers to sell their products to safety net hospitals and clinics at a substantially reduced rate. The reported difference between the 340B price and retail price ranges from 25-50 percent, depending on the drug. The 340B program is not an insurance program for individuals, but you can still benefit from these lower costs if you are a patient at a hospital or clinic enrolled in the program. These health care sites are eligible because they are dedicated to paying for some or all of the cost of their patients' prescriptions. This means they are typically able to pass on the reduced cost directly to patients.

Who qualifies for the 340B Program, and where do I go?

Patients of the nearly 18,000 hospital and clinic sites enrolled in 340B should ask their doctor or pharmacist about how 340B might help make much-needed treatment affordable. If you receive care from a doctor or other health care provider at a 340B site, you can buy your prescriptions through the pharmacy located at the clinic or hospital or any local partner retail pharmacy. Patients do not have to meet any financial thresholds, but you must have an established relationship with a practitioner employed by the 340B site.

Where do I buy drugs at the 340B price?

Approximately 18,000 different locations were registered in 2012 to participate in the 340B program. These include "disproportionate share" hospitals (DSH), which treat a large number of uninsured patients; children's hospitals; community health clinics; hemophilia clinics; family planning clinics; Ryan White HIV/AIDS clinics; American Indian and Hawaiian treatment centers; tuberculosis clinics and state-operated HIV/AIDS drug assistance programs. Please visit the following website to find hospitals or clinics that participate in 340B:

<http://openet.hrsa.gov/opa/CESearch.aspx>

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How much will my prescription cost under the 340B Program?

There is no public listing of 340B prices, but pharmacists will discuss cost and options with you based on your needs and eligibility. Some sites may evaluate one's ability to pay to determine the amount owed by the patient, but will typically work with the patient on an appropriate amount.

What drugs qualify for 340B?

Nearly all drugs are eligible for the 340B discount (except those you receive while an inpatient at the hospital). For many brand-name drugs, the 340B discount may be the only way to get that drug at an affordable price. However, some locations may restrict consumer access to drugs that are controlled substances.

Conclusion

Regardless of income or employment, the 340B program can significantly reduce the cost of drugs if you are uninsured and paying out-of-pocket for medical services. Always check with the pharmacist to compare the 340B price with any other discounts available.

Additional websites for more information

Federal government resources that can help consumers . . .

- Find a local community health center:
 - http://findahealthcenter.hrsa.gov/Search_HCC.aspx
- Find a local hospital offering free or reduced price care:
 - <http://www.hrsa.gov/gethealthcare/affordable/hillburton/index.html>
- Get Health Care:
 - <http://www.hrsa.gov/gethealthcare/index.html>

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The websites recommended in this resource are hosted and maintained by the U.S. government, so we are not responsible for any information or claims provided on those sites. Please share this with your medical or health provider to initiate a conversation about the affordability of your care.

These materials are made possible by a grant from the California HealthCare Foundation (chcf.org).