



Benefits and Me



Understanding Prescription Drug Plans

Understanding your drug plan and prescriptions can help you save money, stay healthier and receive greater satisfaction from your health benefits. Here are some things to consider when making sense of your prescription drug plan:

- **Decide between generic or brand-name drugs.** Choosing generic drugs over a brand name is generally less expensive. The Food and Drug Administration says generic options are as safe and effective as brand-name drugs.
- **Follow directions completely.** Nearly half of all dispensed medications globally are taken inappropriately (e.g., taking at the wrong time, under-dosing, stopping too soon and sharing prescriptions).
- **Talk to your doctor.** Your doctor can help you learn more about your prescribed medications and their generic equivalents.

These approaches can help you save money on the prescription itself and avoid future costly health problems.

5 Ways to Lower Your Health Care Costs

The continuing trend of rising health care costs can significantly impact your budget. While it's difficult to control all the contributing factors of growing costs, educating yourself as a health care consumer is one way to help manage or lower your spending. Consider the following tips:

1. Find the right health care provider. It's essential to compare health care costs and quality, as prices can vary by provider.
2. Talk to your doctor openly about cost. This can help you avoid costly, unnecessary procedures and find lower-cost treatment options to deliver the same results.
3. Get the whole picture. Instead of focusing on just the deductible, factor in all costs like copays, coinsurance and out-of-pocket limits.
4. Only go to the hospital emergency room for true emergencies. Urgent care is often a good alternative and can offer the same level of care.
5. Maintain a healthy lifestyle—the best way to avoid high health care costs is never to incur them. Prevention is key.

It may also be worth checking if your health insurer offers comparison tools. You can manage your health care costs today with a bit of research.

Voluntary Benefits

Terms

Voluntary benefits offer you flexibility to only pay for the benefits you want. Disability insurance is a type of voluntary benefit that can provide income protection when you're unable to work. Take a minute to familiarize yourself with the following disability options:

- **Short-term Disability Insurance (STD)**—STD provides short-term income protection to employees who are unable to work due to injury or illness occurring outside the work environment.
- **Long-term Disability Insurance (LTD)**—LTD provides long-term income protection should an employee lose time on the job due to an injury or illness occurring outside the work environment. The length of LTD plans varies; some may be limited to a period between two and 10 years, while other plans continue paying out until age 65.