

Reducing the Cost of Your Medication

If the cost of medication is a barrier (Con) for you, the following suggestions may help.

- **Your health plan may have "preferred drugs" which are cheaper than other drugs.** If the cost of the drug prescribed is too high, ask your doctor whether there's a similar drug on your plan's preferred list that works as well.
- **Your doctor may be able to prescribe a dose that contains double the amount of your medication.** This would allow you to take half a pill and still get the correct amount of medication per dose. In the long run, the medication will cost less this way.
- **Buy your medication in larger amounts, if your health plan will allow it.** Ask your doctor or pharmacist if doing this would be cheaper for you. If so, ask your doctor to write your prescription for the amount of medication that will save you the most money.
- **Ask your doctor or pharmacist if there is a cheaper "generic" drug available for your prescription.**
- **Shop around.** You may find that the price of your medication is lower at a different local pharmacy or an on-line pharmacy.
- **When you visit your doctor, bring along a list of the medications you're taking.** Your doctor may find ways to reduce the total number of prescription medications you're taking, thus reducing your costs.
- **Look for a discount program** such as *RX Drug Card* (1-888-216-2461; www.rxdrugcard.com) or *AARP Pharmacy Service* (1-800-456-2277; www.rpspharmacy.com)
- **Look for a patient assistance program for income-eligible people with or without insurance.** The organization, Partnership for Prescription Assistance (www.pparx.org ; 1-888-477-2669), includes access to more than 475 public and private assistance programs.
- **You can avoid extra trips to the pharmacy for medication** if you get a three-month supply or order your medication by mail.
- **Ask your doctors whether they have samples of any new medication they prescribe so that you won't lose money if you need to change prescriptions.**

Con #2: I wouldn't be able to eat as much as I want.

Possible Comebacks:

- I will eat more slowly and still enjoy my food.
- I will choose **nutrient-dense** foods rather than **energy-dense foods** which will save calories and help me feel full.
- I will look for low-calorie versions of my favorite foods.

Add your own comebacks to this list.

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Con #3: Eating a healthy diet seems complicated.

Possible Comebacks:

- I'll look for ways to prepare new meals that are simple and quick and will look for some easy snack options, like fresh fruit and fat-free milk.
- I'll print a copy of a brochure about the DASH eating plan that has menu ideas and recipes (www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/hbp/dash/) or order it by calling 301-592-8573 or 240-629-3255 (TTY).
- I will remind myself that in addition to lowering my blood pressure, healthy eating also prevents several cancers, improves cholesterol levels, and helps me manage my weight.

Add your own comebacks to this list.

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Energy-density is the number of calories per ounce or gram of weight in a food. Energy-dense foods are usually refined grains, added sugars, sodium, and saturated and trans fats—they are the foods that have little nutritional value. Energy-dense foods include most store bought cookies, crackers, chips, candy, doughnuts, soda, sweetened fruit juice, and white pasta. The more energy-dense a food is, the more calories it contains.

Nutrient-density is the ratio of a food's beneficial nutrients relative to the food's energy-density (fat, sugar, sodium content). For example, the nutrient-density of fruits and vegetables is greater than the nutrient-density of chocolate cake. Healthy foods are generally defined as those foods that are high in nutrient-density and low in energy-density.