

# Dentists, Antibiotics, and getting ripped off at the Pharmacy.

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**“Dentists prescribe about 10 percent of all antibiotics, making them the fourth largest prescriber.”**

According to the [American Dental Association](#).

***As a prescriber, I was shocked when I needed my own prescription filled (I took it to CVS – big mistake). I have prescription drug coverage, or so I thought. It hardly covered 25% of the cost! So what’s the deal?***



As a dentist, we prescribe:

- antibiotics for things like; tooth pain from needing a [root canal](#), [periodontal disease](#), or even for a sinus infection that is causing upper tooth pain
- pain medication – post-operative pain relief or pain from a cracked/dying tooth
- Oral mouth rinses for periodontal disease, etc.

To help you be better prepared to take your prescription to the pharmacist, here's the list and check out the [full article](#) from [Consumer Reports](#).

1. **Skip chain drugstores.** *For all five drugs we priced, the big pharmacy chains consistently charged the most. Among all of the walk-in stores, Costco offered the lowest prices. You don't need to be a member to use its pharmacy, though joining can net you more discounts.*
2. **Support independents.** *Though you might think that mom and pop stores usually charge higher prices, we found that wasn't always the case. In fact, we found some real bargains at local independent pharmacies, as well as some higher prices. We also found wide fluctuations at supermarkets, another place you might not expect to save. Another advantage of independent drugstores: We often had luck asking for a lower price,*

where pharmacists might have more flexibility to match or beat competitor's prices.

3. **Don't always use your health insurance.** Many chain and big-box stores offer hundreds of common generics at prices as low as \$4 for a 30-day supply and \$10 for a 90-day supply for people who pay out of pocket. Sam's Club even fills some prescriptions free for members. Check the fine print: There may be a small fee to sign up, and not all discount programs are open to people with Medicare, Medicaid, or Tricare insurance. And keep in mind that when you bypass your insurance, money spent on your medication won't count toward your deductible or out-of-pocket maximums.
4. **Always ask "Is this your lowest price?"** Victor Curtis of Costco told us that its contracts for Medicare Part D plans prohibit pharmacists from offering a better cash price to a customer unless a customer asks. And Rite Aid told us that their pharmacists process prescriptions through insurance unless customers tell them to do otherwise. Usually we found that asking can prompt the person on the phone to dig a bit for any available discount programs, cards, and coupons. Check back often, because prices and offers may change. And never assume that one pharmacy's "discounted" price is lower than another's regular price.
5. **Seek a 90-day prescription.** For drugs you take long term, it can be more convenient and even cheaper. For example, if you use insurance, you'll pay one co-pay rather than three. And for discount generic drug programs, paying \$10 for a 90-day supply works out to less than \$4 every 30 days.

6. **Look online.** *If you're paying out of pocket, check GoodRx.com to learn its "fair price" and use that to negotiate if a pharmacist quotes you a higher price. You can also fill a prescription with an online pharmacy. The one we shopped, HealthWarehouse.com, had the lowest prices overall. Just be careful about the one you choose. Only use an online retailer that clearly operates within the U.S. and displays the "VIPPS" symbol to show that it's a Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Site. Most sites that bill themselves as "Canadian" are actually fake storefronts selling low-quality or counterfeit products. Internet pharmacies based in other countries that advertise heavily discounted medications are almost never legitimate, according to the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP), a nonprofit organization that accredits pharmacy websites. Once you've verified that a retailer is legit, read terms carefully. For example, HealthWarehouse.com ships to all 50 states; others may not. And you'll have to wait for shipping.*

As an example of how you can research online, attached is the [Sam's Club Drug List](#).

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