

## For More Information



Sign up for *Best Buy Drug* free [newsletter](#)

Visit: <http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/customer-service/email-service/e-mail-newsletters/index.htm>

Go online to obtain free downloadable worksheets you can use to talk to your doctor about the most effective and affordable medicines.

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Articles in this newsletter are not a substitute for the care and advice of medical professionals. When you have a question or need medical advice, diagnosis or treatment, consult your physician.

This newsletter is produced by Inova Health System in conjunction with your faith community. If you prefer not to receive this newsletter, please notify the appropriate personnel in your faith community.

Inova Health System is a not-for-profit health care system based in Northern Virginia that consists of hospitals and other health services including emergency and urgent care centers, home care, nursing homes, mental health, blood donor services, and wellness classes. Governed by a voluntary board of community members, Inova's mission is to improve the health of the diverse community we serve through excellence in patient care, education and research.



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## For Your Health

### Saving on Prescription Drugs

Millions of Americans have been hit hard by the recession and recent financial crisis. Unfortunately, some families have lost health insurance coverage and have to pay for many out of pocket health care expenses.

For some people, medication costs are a serious issue, and it can mean the difference between taking their drugs as prescribed, and sadly not taking them at all.

*Consumer Reports* found in a recent survey that a third of Americans say they recently have taken potentially dangerous measures to cut their drug costs, such as failing to fill a prescription, skipping a dosage, or taking an expired medication, cutting pills in half without their doctor's permission or sharing a prescription.

The findings in the *Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs* patient education reports are based primarily on comprehensive and independent reviews of the scientific literature and evidence on the effectiveness and safety of drugs in specific classes. The reviews were conducted by teams of physicians and researchers under the auspices of the Drug Effectiveness Review Project, or DERP, which is based at the Oregon Health & Science University Evidence-based Practice Center (EPC) in Portland, Oregon. For more information about DERP, go to:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/ohsuedu/research/policycenter/DERP/index.cfm>

Another consumer group, AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization for people age 50 and over. AARP is dedicated to enhancing quality of life for all as we age and they provide a host of information to help seniors stay informed and healthy.

## Knowledge is Power!

### Wise Up on Meds

Tools you need to run a simple, yet effective program to teach people to use medications wisely and safely.



**AARP**

CONVERSATION  
IS THE BEST  
MEDICINE.

AARP has been working for several years on educating the community on the wise use of medications. Now AARP is sharing Wise Up on Meds—a free kit filled with all the tools you need to run a simple, yet effective program for your clients and community members.

The box includes a facilitator's guide and *Your Medicines and You*, an educational and entertaining video starring expert Geriatrician and former AARP Visiting Scholar, Dr. Bill Thomas.

The box also includes educational materials and Personal Medication

Records in wallet-sized holders to serve 25 participants. It is everything that community partners need to run a simple wise use of medication program. Contact Lauren Torrisi at [ltorrisi@aarp.org](mailto:ltorrisi@aarp.org) or fax 202-434-6607 requesting your free materials!

### BEST DRUGS FOR LESS

Get the medicines you need at prices you can afford

Top choices for...

Heart disease  
Diabetes  
Insomnia  
Blood pressure  
Migraine  
Pain  
Depression  
Cholesterol  
Menopause  
ADHD & more

Ratings of  
**200+**  
top-selling  
medicines



*Best Drugs for Less* magazine is an alternative for consumers who would like the information easily in hand when they visit their doctor or for those without Internet access. Besides information on the drugs and the conditions they treat, you'll also find "Best Buy" picks, which, if appropriate for your condition, could save you thousands of dollars a year.

## Common Myths

**Myth:** I'm not in the best health so my medicine has to be expensive.

**Truth:** Don't hesitate to discuss the cost of medicines with your doctor. Unless you bring it up, your doctor may assume that prescription cost is not a factor for you.

**Myth:** The pharmacist is only there to fill the prescription.

**Truth:** Always find out more information about your prescription, and ask your doctor why they are prescribing a drug. And your pharmacist if the drug is FDA-approved for your condition or is being prescribed "off-label", meaning for a purpose other than the ones for which the FDA has certified that it is beneficial. If the drug is being prescribed off-label, ask your doctor about the evidence that shows it will work in your case.

## Talk to Your Doctor

Don't assume that just because an ad on television sounds very impressive that the drug is really the better treatment option for you. Be sure to talk to your health professional to discuss if there are any options available for you to consider.

**Recognize free samples for what they!** Often samples are given to doctors by drug companies primarily as a marketing tool. But they may or may not be the best choice for what ails you.

**Remember that older drugs are often just as good!** There is evidence that shows that many older drugs available as low-cost generics are as good as, or better than, the pricey new ones coming on the market.

**Know that drugs within a class or group aren't always that different!** Drug makers argue that each drug is unique and that each person may respond differently to it. That's true, but it's also true that in some classes of medicines, there are several drugs that achieve pretty much the same results for most people. In other words, you can possibly work with your health professional to discuss if substituting one for another will be a good alternative.